

THE ONLY COMIC LIBRARY PUBLISHED IN THE WORLD.

THE FIVE CENT COMIC LIBRARY

Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, September 29, 1892.

No. 162. { COMPLETE. }

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 29 WEST 26TH STREET, N. Y.
New York, May 14, 1897.

{ PRICE } Vol. VII.
{ 5 CENTS. }

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1897, by FRANK TOUSEY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Mortimer Merry; or, THE PRANKS OF A BOY MESMERIST.

By TOM TEASER.

PART II.



"Oh, he's just playin' off, ain't yu, plug?" "Playin' off nothin'! This hoss is Doctor Rice and I'm going to win this race. Get along there, Doc, you old plug!" "Faster, plug!" said Mort. The sport used his imaginary whip with extra force, slashing about him like mad. "Hi-hi, keep amoving, you old cow, we've got to win!"

The subscription price of THE FIVE CENT COMIC LIBRARY by the year is \$2.50; \$1.25 per six months, post-paid. Address FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 29 West 26th Street, New York.

MORTIMER MERRY;

OR,

The Pranks of a Boy Mesmerist.

A STORY FULL OF FUN AND SCIENCE.

PART II.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "Our Willie," "Muldoon's Grocery Store," Muldoon's Brother Dan," etc., etc., etc.

Now Johnny Green was not undressed. He had on a shirt. At Mort's bidding, however, he took a header.

He landed in dust three inches thick. Then he began to flounder around. He really thought he was swimming. "Hi, fellows, it's bully and cool!" "Come on!" cried Mort to another youngster.

This boy had on a shirt and trousers. He gave a jump and began to strike out as if swimming.

There wasn't a boy in the crowd over twelve years old.

One or two were only ten. The little fellows got off all of their clothes before Mort noticed them.

He had started them, and they carried out his ideas.

When he saw them "in the altogether" he chuckled, but said nothing.

Those who were nearly out of their clothes took his attention.

"Hi, hi! What are you waiting for? Come in here!"

In they went, as they supposed, floundering about in the dust.

"Hi! let's spatter Johnny, boys!"

"Good enough, soak him!"

"Let's duck him, boys!"

"You can't do it, any of you!"

A lot of clothes on the stoop, and six naked, or nearly so, boys plowing in the dust, was enough to attract attention.

It did.

Officer Sniffen, of the police force, got onto the disturbance.

Now Peleg Q. Sniffen, and he always stuck to his Q., was a stickler for order in that town.

He was parading the shady side of the street, swinging a rattan switch when he met the boys.

He was horrified.

The sight of the living pictures across the way was too much for his dignity.

Swinging his rattan vigorously he descended upon those hypnotized youths like a thousand of brick.

In the midst of the fun Mort suddenly saw him coming.

"Hi—hi! all right—all right!" he said. "Cheese it, here's a copper!"

The boys recovered themselves in a jiffy. Not before Sniffen was upon them, however.

Peleg Q. let fly with that long switch of his pretty lively.

Whack!

Swish!

Crack!

One of the naked boys got it across the back.

He grabbed his clothes and dusted.

The others dusted without all their things.

Sniffen dusted what they had on for them.

He wasn't slow at it either.

"Goldurn ye, what du yu mean running abaout with nuthing on yu like thet fur, durn yu! I'll learn yu better manners, consarn ye!"

Whack!

Biff!

Plunk!

Out came the boss and his clerks to see the fun.

Across the street came the pedestrians.

The town seemed to suddenly wake up.

Sniffen was waking up the boys on his own account.

Then all got away with more or less cuts.

The greater part of their clothing was left behind.

They hadn't any idea of what they were doing.

No one had seen them but Peleg.

Of course we don't count Mort, for he wouldn't let on.

When Sniffen complained therefore to one of the fathers that his boy had been pretending to swim in the road, the man laughed at him.

The boy had on all his clothes by this time.

He denied Sniffen's story like a major.

"You must think I'm foolish as you," he said.

The other boys said the same thing.

One had gone home with nothing on

him but his own innocence, his tegs in his hand.

He had dressed in the barn, without knowing how he had come to be in such unconventional attire, and had then gone back to the store.

He declared as boldly as the rest that he had not been in swimming.

"Wouldn't my hair be wet if I was?" he asked. "Guess you're beefing, Peleg Sniffen!"

"My name is Peleg Q., if you please, and I say you was in swimming."

"Rats!" said the boys, and their fathers echoed the sentiment.

"In yer garret!" added Johnny Green.

"I'm afraid Peleg won't win his case," mused Mort, "but those boys will remember the rattan all the same. You couldn't mesmerize that!"

PART VII.

THE hot weather did not last very long, and folks soon had a chance to breathe.

The weather did not bother Mort the least bit, and there was no postponement of his fun on its account.

He went right on with his scientific investigations, combined with sport.

The next fellow that he had fun with was Denny Murphy.

The thing happened on a Sunday, when everybody was out.

Sunday was as good a day as any for fun.

There were more people on the street then than at other times.

Saturday night might be a possible exception, but there were difficulties in the way of that time.

There were generally too many people around, and it was dark.

Well, on a pleasant Sunday morning about this time, Denny Murphy went to church.

He wore his best clothes, and was a perfect peach.

He had on a shiny black hat and a long-tailed black coat, with a big white peony in the lapel.

As it was not cold he wore his coat open, displaying a checked vest of a very loud pattern.

His trousers were light gray, with a stripe down the seam, and he wore white gaiters over his shoes.

In his right fist he carried a blackthorn stick, and altogether he looked quite stunning.

His little sluggers twinkled in the sunlight, his turn-up nose expressed pride in its owner, and his face was wreathed with smiles.

As he came ambling down the walk leading from the church door he looked the picture of contentment.

He also looked as if he were on the mash, which was a fact.

In short, he had his weather eye on the lookout for Honora Magillicuddy, who worked for a neighbor of Judge Holdover.

Now the colored church was not far from where Denny Murphy went.

It let out just at the same time as Denny's place did.

Denny stood at the edge of the curb waiting for Honora to appear.

Along came Rosie, Mr. Merry's cook.

Not far behind her were other coons.

One dandy moke was hurrying up to ask Rosie to let him see her home.

Rosie was got up in the most giddy style.

She wore a dress made of an old set of awnings used by Mr. Merry.

The stuff was striped blue and white, and wide stripes at that.

Rosie had made a full skirt of the same that was very tart.

Then she had on a blue cloth jacket with balloon sleeves and anchors embroidered on the collar.

She also wore a sailor hat, and her wool stuck out straight behind like a horse's tail.

In one hand she carried a white parasol. The other was occupied by a big fan, and she wore white mitts.

If Denny Murphy was a peach, she was a whole basket of them.

She walked along with a high stepping air, that showed she was perfectly satisfied with herself.

Now Mort Merry was also out on the street that pleasant Sunday morning.

First he caught on to Denny Murphy waiting for his girl.

Then he saw Rosie a little way off coming along in all her glory.

He waved his hands rapidly in front of Denny's eyes.

"Sure, an' phwat is the matther wid yez, Masther Mor—"

"Here's your girl, Denny. It's Rosie, our cook."

Another pass and Denny was fixed.

Miss Magillicuddy had just arrived.

"Are yez waitin' for me, Misther Murphy?" she asked.

"Sure, I am not. I hov nothin' to do wid yez."

At that moment Rosie came up.

Denny stuck out his arm and smiled.

Rosie looked mad.

It was only for a second.

Then Mort caught her eye.

In a jiffy she was hoodooed.

"There's your mash, Rosie. Take his arm."

Then Rosie smiled even more sweetly than Denny.

After that she took his arm.

Then two went promenading down the street.

This was now full of tarriers and coons just out from church.

That misfit couple attracted no end of attention.

The darkies did not seem to feel flattered.

"Wha' Miss Rosie wan' to walk wif dat ign'ant I'sh fellah fo?" sputtered Rosie's intended mash.

"Clar' to gracious, ef dat ain' de bigges' insult de col'd folks eber had!"

"Goodness me, ain' dey no oder comp'ny 'cept dat bog-trottin' Mick fo' her to take?"

"Eber sence dat lady hugged de dood in de street she am jus' crazy ober white folks."

"Reckon she ain' got much sense fo' to go sachayin' 'long de street wid a I'sh-man!"

That's what the coons said about it.

The Irish contingent was just as disgusted.

"Aha, wud yez mind Dinny Murphy wid the nagur winch!"

"Faix, he's aisy satisfied, the vilyan."

"Begob, that's another injustus to owld Oireland, so it is."

"Begorry, I thot he had more dacincy about um nor thot!"

"To take an ugly owld black crow like that!"

"Whin there do be purty Irish girruls be the score."

"Be the piper, some wan ought to smash the jaw av um!"

A dandy coon happened to hear that last remark.

He didn't like it.

"H'm! dat's de fus' time dat flannen mouf Mick eber was in good comp'ny in his life!" he muttered.

"Go an, ye black idjut! Phwat are yez talkin' about?"

"It's a wondah dat a 'spectable col'd lady lak dat should lowah hersef by walkin' wif him," said another coon, "but he am in polite sahciety fo' once, anyhow."

Some of the Irish resented this speech.

"Lower herself, is it?" screamed one woman. "Begosh, she ought to considher it an honor for a foine mon like Denny Murphy to walk wid her."

"Polite soci'ty, is it?" growled another. "Begorry, it's the first time that winch wor iver in it."

"Big story, she's a heap sight bettah dan de I'sh!"

"Ye're a dom liar, she's not!"

"I'sh is good fo' nuffin 'cept totin' swill ter hogs."

"And nagurs is worse nor the hogs thim-silves, faix."

"Go chase yo'se'f, yo' ol' lump o' co'n beef and cabbage!"

"Don't yez tock to me loike thot, ye owld liver lips!"

"Don' yo' go fo' to 'sult me, yo'—"

"Club the head off 'um, McGinty!"

"Don't yez let him give yez anny lip!"

"Neber min' talkin' to sech trash, Mistah Johnsing!"

"Go an, ye robber! Who are yez callin' trash?"

"Wull, I reckon ef yo' don' know, yo mus' be mighty ign'ant!"

"Slug the nagur, Murty!"

The coons began to feel for their razors. The other fellows began picking up stones.

There would have been a row in just about two shakes.

In the nick of time Peleg Q. Sniffen came along.

The other churches began to empty themselves also.

Sniffen whacked one of the belligerent Irishmen over the dicer with his club.

Then he hit one of the coons on the shin with the same.

"Gosh hang yu, what yu want ter obstruct the streets fur, yu goldarn loafers?" he asked.

Then the priest came along and pacified his congregation.

The coon parson happened by at the same moment and made his parishioners get a move on themselves.

Meanwhile the cause of the fuss had passed on.

Neither Denny Murphy nor Rosie was aware of the trouble they had made.

Plenty of people smiled as they passed them by, but no remarks were made.

Mort followed them at a convenient distance, and didn't try to exert any more mesmeric influence upon them.

What there was would work off of itself before long.

It did so just as Rosie reached her own gate.

Then she awoke to the fact that she had the Irishman's arm.

She pulled her own away in a hurry.

"How dare yo' touch me, yo' I'sh loaf-ah?" she demanded.

"Oh, glory, wud yez luk at thot, the nagur winch do be thryin' to mash me!"

Denny's conceit was fully equal to Rosie's indignation.

"Ah'll mash yo', shu' nuff, ef yo' don' clar' o't!"

Then Rosie banged Denny over the head with her fan.

After that she took her fist.

"Ah'll learn yo' to go fc'll'in' a 'spectable col'd lady cleah home to de gate!" she remarked.

Denny did not stop to argue the point. One crack from that coon lady's big fist was quite sufficient.

He was sure that at least a dozen teeth had been loosened by it.

Without further ado he hurried away, meeting one of his countrymen a trifle further on.

"And phwat's yer hurry, Dinny?"

"Faix, the nagur winch nearly bruk me jaw, so she did."

"And sarve ye right, faix!"

"For phwy do yez say that?"

"Because yez had ought to have more sinse than to wock home wid her from mass."

"Me is ut?"

"Yis, ye, and leavin' yer own girrul out in the cowl."

"Go an, I niver wocked home wid her!" protested Denny.

"Yer the biggest liar unhung av yez say thot, for didn't I see yez and didn't I see yez just laving her at the gate. It's a fool she med av yez, Dinny, and begorra, it sarves yez right."

"But I tell yez I niver wocked home wid her. It wor just be chance I met her as I was goin' home, just neow."

"Ah, go on wid yez for a double-faced liar, Dinny Murphy!" cried the other.

"Shure yez don't live in this direction at all, nor do Miss Magillicuddy naither. Sure it wor mashing the winch, yez wor, and I'm ashamed av yez, so I am—"

Then the indignant Irishman went away, leaving Denny very much puzzled.

"Sure, I don't think it's me that's in it at all," he muttered. "It's eout av me lathitude entirely I am, and faix, I can't make it eout. Phwat wud I be doin' wockin' home wid a nagur?"

As he retraced his steps he met many of his friends.

Some of them passed him without even a nod.

Others glared at him and shook their fists.

Others again openly threatened to lick him the first time they met him alone.

It made no difference how much he denied the thing, for there were always a plenty to swear him down.

Finally he got tired of denying it, and threatened to lick the first man that mentioned the affair.

"Begorra, av I done it I wor dhrunk," he said, "and not responsible—and troth, nobody but a dhrunken man wud think av goin' home wid a nagur."

This was accepted as an ample apology and no more was said about it.

Rosie got another surprise when she got settled in her kitchen.

Mrs. Merry had seen her on the street with Denny, and thought she'd joke the cook about it.

"You had some very nice company home from church, didn't you, Rosie?" she asked.

"Who dat, Mis' Merry, Mistah Johnsing, yo' mean?"

"No, of course not. Judge Holdover's Irishman, Dennis."

"Ah didn' come home fom chu'ch wif dat I'shman, missy," muttered Rosie.

"He jus' tagged aftah me, fo' to bodder me, but ah jus' put a flea in him eah, ah did."

"But, Rosie, I saw you walking with him on the street, with your arm in his."

"Sakes alibe, missis. Ah don' see wha's de use ob you' gwine to chu'ch ef yo' come home and tell such awful stories as dem," said Rosie, shaking her head.

"But it isn't a story, Rosie. Lots of people saw—"

"Does yo' preachah uphol' yo' in lyin', Mis' Merry?"

"Certainly not, but I tell you that this is—"

"Ef Ah was yo', hon'. Ah'd jus' go inter mah closet an' flop down on mah knees an' pray de good Lo'd ter take away dat lyin' sperit ob yo'n," said Rosie, gravely. "Yo'll neber get to heaben, long's yo' lib, ef yo' keep dat up."

There was no use arguin' with Rosie. She was too seriously inclined just then to make it pay.

Mrs. Merry gave it up.

She fired a shot at the cook as she went out, however.

"Well, of all the hypocrites I ever heard of, you are the worst. I just wonder how you act so, but it's because you don't know any better, I guess."

"Sumpin' drefful am shuah to happen to de missis ef she will presist in tellin' sech awful lies as she's been tellin' lately," grunted Rosie, when she was alone. "It am jus' too bad to see a nice lady lak dat gwine ter destruction. Ef de pra's ob a good col'd lady kin sabe her, I'se gwine ter try, fo' it's mah duty and Ah's gwine ter spoke to de pahson abo't it, dis very day."

Rosie was decidedly surprised, however, when she saw the colored preacher, to hear him tell the same story that Mrs. Merry had, and to take her to task for it.

"Ah'll just bet you uns has got a put-up job agen me," she sputtered, "an' whatever de one says, de oder will swear to. I'se just gwine ter pay no mo' tention to eider ob yousel!"

That ended the affair, and Rosie did not waste any of her prayers on her mistress.

Shortly after this, Mort got to work with his mesmeric forces again, and hoodooed Jim Juggs, the meanest man in town.

It happened to be a hot day, hotter than that other one I told about.

The dust lay thick in the road, for it had not rained in days.

The sun had just dried up every bit of moisture, and the dust was something awful.

It was four or five inches deep in town, and worse than that outside.

The heat was just blistering, and there wasn't air enough stirring to move a thistle top.

You could scarcely see a man out all over town.

Jim Juggs drove in to sell some eggs.

If he hadn't sold them that day they would have boiled.

Mort was sitting in the shade when Jim went by.

He concluded to have some fun with the hayseed.

Jim was sure to stay down in the village some little time.

He was always on the lookout for some one to treat him.

Never by any chance would he treat any one else if he could possibly help it.

Mort got a white umbrella and followed the hayseed at his leisure.

He found the fellow just coming out of the tavern.

Jim had not found any one there and so he had not remained long.

Mort looked at him fixedly and got his attention.

Then he flirted his fingers at him three or four times.

"You're an awfully clever fellow, Jim."

"Why hallo, Mort, haow air yu, anyhaow!"

"You're going to give me a ride up to your house, Jim."

"Why suttinly, come right along. Glad tu hev yu, b'gosh!"

Jim Juggs was certainly not in his right mind.

He was never known to give any one a lift on the road.

He always wanted to charge them if he did.

Nobody ever thought of asking him for a ride, he was so mean.

"Yes, I'm going up to the house with you, Jim."

"That's right, come right along, glad tu hev ye, git right in and come along."

To work the snap that he had on hand it was necessary for Mort to keep right with Jim Juggs.

The hayseed was not an easy subject to work and Mort had to give him all his attention.

So he got into the wagon and gave Jim a few more passes and winks.

Jim was ready to do anything that Mort told him after that, only it was important that the young mesmerist should not leave him to himself long.

Away went Jim, Mort sitting on the seat beside him, holding the umbrella over both.

Mort did that so that he could keep the hayseed's eye.

The few folks sitting at their windows as the two drove by, wondered what had come over Jim Juggs to take on a passenger.

"Reckon he's taken his pay for him a'ready," observed Plug Cutt. "Jim don't do those things for nothing."

Well, they arrived at the house and Jim drove into the yard and under a shed.

His wife was busy indoors and paid no attention.

Mort jumped out of the wagon, fixed his eye on Jim and started to work his little racket.

PART VIII.

"It's a pretty cold day, Jim," remarked Mort.

The hayseed began thrashing his sides with his arms.

"Yas, blowed ef it ain't powerful cold."

Then he blew on his fingers and stamped his feet.

You may remember that it was a scorching hot day.

That's just what it was, but Jim was under a spell.

"Lots of snow on the ground too, isn't there?"

"Sakes alive, yes, dead loads of it, b'gosh."

"And it's good and crisp too, and level."

"That's so, it's level as a floor, durn me if it ain't."

"You ought to go out for a sleigh ride, Jim."

"Think so? Reckon I hain't got time."

"Why, yes, you have, lots of it. Get your cutter out, Jim."

Now that cutter was stuck away on a rack at the top of the carriage house.

It wasn't an easy job to get it down by any means.

Mort kept Jim Juggs at it, however, never letting up on him till the job was done.

The cutter was dusty and rusty, and musty and moth eaten.

If Jim hadn't been so mean he would have sold it for junk long before then.

Having got it down, sweating and fuming and tired, he hauled it out into the yard.

"There we are, Jim! Let's hitch up and go off on a fine old ride."

"Wall, naow, yu jest bet we will, b'gosh!"

Then Jim hitched his horse to the sleigh and got out a buffalo robe and chucked it in.

Mort would have liked to made Jim get out a fur hat and mittens, but he was afraid to disturb the old woman.

All this time she was busy in the kitchen, and didn't come out to see what was up.

"Get in, Jim, and show us what you're made of," said Mort.

The hayseed got in, drew the robe up as high as his breast, cracked his whip, and started off.

Mort had no desire to go sleigh-riding in August.

Away went Jim, out of the yard and down the road lickety clip.

The dust flew in clouds and the old nag was nearly blinded.

He didn't like his job for a cent.

He didn't know what to make of it, either.

Mort followed at a lively pace so as not to let Jim get too far ahead of him.

"Go it, you old snoozer!" he cried.

"You're having an elegant time. Keep it up."

As long as Jim could hear his voice it was all right.

There was danger of the spell losing its force, however, if the hayseed got too far away.

Once or twice it came pretty near to that.

Jim seemed to half realize what he was about and came to a stop.

"What in all tarnation be I abaout? Durned ef it don't seem like as if I was"

Mort put on a spurt, took a short cut, and came up in front.

"Hi-hi! get along there, what are you stopping for when the sleighing is so fine? Get a move on you, you old jay!"

That did the business.

Off started Jim again, dust flying, horse snorting, and whip cracking.

Mort cut off a bend in the road by going across lots, and got up just in time to keep Jim from coming out of his trance again.

"Hallo, there! get a move on you, keep it up, can't you?"

Jim did keep it up, for a fact.

This time he got right into town.

He went in all a-flying, sending up a cloud of dust, scattering hens and chickens, and making people wonder what was up.

Dogs came chasing out of doors, setting up a terrible barking, and men and women followed them to see what was going on.

"Well, I swan, ef Jim Juggs ain't got his sleigh out."

"Fust one of the season, tu, by gosh!"

"Bully day for sleighin', ain't it?"

Now all this kept in Jim's head the idea that Mort had put there.

Consequently it wasn't necessary for Mort to say a word.

He didn't.

He came strolling in with his white umbrella over his head, looking as cool as a cucumber.

Meanwhile, Jim was having a high old time.

He cracked his whip and told his horse to get along faster.

"Reckon none o' yu fellers c'n pass me," he shouted.

"H'm, fine sleighin', ain't it?"

"Just the day fur it, hey?"

"Wall, yu bet!"

Away went Jim through the main street, setting everybody to wondering and talking.

"I'll bet a dollar he's clear off his perch."

"Crazy as a loon, by durn!"

"The idee of gettin' aout a sleigh a br'ilin' hot day like this."

"And raisin' sech a dust, tew. That's jest like Jim Juggs!"

"Reckon he's gettin' so foolish, some one 'll have to put him in a 'sylum'!"

Jim Juggs didn't come out of his hypnotic state till nearly out of town.

Then he suddenly discovered what he was doing.

He stopped, kicked off the buffalo robe, got out, swabbed his reeking brow on his coat sleeve, and said something considerably warmer than the weather was.

"Wall, by gosh, I must have been awfully full when I sot aout, durn my skin if I wasn't!"

Then he threw off his coat and began to swab his head.

"Gosh durned if this ain't the craziest caper I ever cut. Go sleigh ridin' on a day like this! Wall, I swun!"

"Gee whiz! What'll folks say? Darned if all the boys won't tease the life aout o' me abaout it! Haow in time be I goin' tu git araound it, I wonder?"

There didn't seem to be any good way.

Jim pondered on the subject and at last had to give it up.

"Wonder the old woman didn't find it aout when I come home loaded. She ginally does. Must ha' been all-fired busy somewheres."

"Wall, I can't go back this way, durned if I can, and hev all the taown pokin' fun at me. Reckon I'll hev tu onhitch, go home horseback and leave the sleigh here."

"Mought say I was takin it tu be fixed, but they'll want tu know why I didn't put it on a wagon, durn their curiosity."

Then Jim swabbed his broiling face some more and finally unhitched the horse.

Then he got on the nag's back and rode home by a roundabout way so as not to be seen.

He got home late and his wife jawed him for not being in time for dinner, and wanted to know what he had been drinking.

"Hard cider'll be the ruination of yu, Jeems," she declared, "and ef yu don't shet daown on it, blamed if I don't apply fur a bill."

"Hain't been drinkin' nawthtin'," said Jim. "Yer always suspicion things what never happen. I was busy up tu taown an' cudn't git away sooner."

"Yas, goin' sleigh ridin' in August!" snorted the other. "I know all abaout it, 'cause Mary Ann Simpkins and Jane Maria Sniffen seen yu pass their haouse."

an' come tu ax if yu wasn't in yu're right mind."

"Them old hens say a heap sight more'n their prayers," growled Jim.

"Wall, that's more'n yu say, anyhaow, Jim Juggs," and Jim had no more to say.

He went late that night with a wagon and brought home his sleigh, but it was a long time before the fellows in town got over talking about the affair.

Every time they saw Jim for a month, they wanted to know something about sleighing and when he was going again, and if he wouldn't let them know in time to go with him and more to the same purpose till Jim got sick of hearing it.

Meanwhile, however, Mort was having

queah, don't you know," laughed Cholly. "Pon me wawd, I believe I was, yas, ha, ha!"

"Of course you are, you are going there now, you are going to sing to her and ask her to fly with you and be your love."

"Yas, ha, ha, ha, why, yas, weally, so I am! Ha, ha, that's awfully queah, isn't it? Ha, ha!"

"Stop laughing," said Mort. "You must be serious. You are going to serenade Miss Snipe."

"To be shaw I am," said the dude.

Then Mort made a few passes, and got a cinch on Cholly's brain.

There wasn't much of it.

Mort didn't have his hands full.

There was a light in a second story window.

Probably Miss Snipe was in her room arranging her toilet.

Cholly entered the yard and stood under the window.

Mort did not go so close.

He had his reasons.

He remained outside behind a tree, but kept his mind on Cholly.

Now the dude had no more idea what he was doing than if he had not been there.

"Sing," said Mort, "play and sing."

Cholly heard, but he didn't know that Mort had spoken.



"OH, HE'S JUST PLAYIN' OFF, AIN'T YU, PLUG?" "PLAYIN' OFF NOTHIN'! THIS HOSS IS DOCTOR RICE AND I'M GOING TO WIN THIS RACE. GET ALONG THERE, DOC, YOU OLD PLUG!" "FASTER, PLUG!" SAID MORT. THE SPORT USED HIS IMAGINARY WHIP WITH EXTRA FORCE, SLASHING ABOUT HIM LIKE MAD. "HI-HI, KEEP AMOVING, YOU OLD COW, WE'VE GOT TO WIN!"

more fun, entirely unsuspected, and making folks wonder what had come over other folks in town.

One evening, as Mort was going out to call on some friends, he met Cholly Smith. Cholly was also going calling.

He had a guitar with him.

That dude belonged to a banjo and guitar club.

He could play pretty well, if he didn't know much.

When Mort saw him he had an idea.

"Hallo, Cholly! Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm going to the club, deah boy. We are practicing for an entertainment, don't you know."

"No, you ain't. You're going to serenade Miss Snipe."

"Ha, ha! That's deucedly clevah—awfully funny, don't you—"

"I say you are going to serenade Miss Snipe this evening."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, that's deuced

"Good-bye, Cholly, I'm going. Good-bye, old chap."

"Ah, good-bye, me deah fellah. Awfully pleased to have seen you, don't you know?"

"Good-bye, Cholly!"

"Good-bye," said the dude, and then he walked away as if Mort had gone off.

Mort was right alongside him all the time.

He didn't seem to know it, however.

As he walked on, Mort walked with him.

"Aw, yas, I'm going to sewenade Miss Snipe. Chawming cweachah, by Jaove!"

Mort had got that idea firmly fixed in the dude's noddle box.

"Yas, stunning gawl, Miss Snipe, lovely cweachaw, just me style, don't you know."

Down the street went Cholly with Mort at his side, till he reached the old maid's house.

It was dusk by this time and the moon had not arisen.

"Aoh, bah Jaove, she's theah, don't you know, lovely gawl."

He took his guitar out of its case and began to twang it.

Plunk-plunk—pink-pink-pink.

Next he began to sing.

Mort put the words in his head.

"Oh, fly with me, my Phoebe Jane,

Across the raging water,

You are my peach, my honey girl,

You are—that is, you orter."

Then there was more music on the guitar.

Then Cholly piped up for the second verse.

"My lovely Jane, my giddy Snipe,

Oh, would I had some money,

You are my peach, so rich and ripe,

And I'm your own sweet honey."

More instrumental music followed this effusion.

By this time the sound had begun to attract attention.

The neighbors stuck their heads out of their windows and listened.

They thought somebody must be clean crazy.

Nobody had ever heard of such a thing as singing under Miss Snipe's window.

The next verse now rose sweet and clear above the silence.

"I only love one girl, her name is Phoebe Jane, The last one it is Snipe—she lives down in the lane,

She's going to be my bride and fly with me away, I'm stuck on Phoebe Jane, she is so awful gay."

Plunk-plunk, plinketty-plink—tum-tum-tum!

By this time Miss Snipe was just boiling over.

Oh, you old daisy, we never must part!
Oh, what a screamer, how you can yell,
You're a fine schemer, but don't—"

"Go away, I say!" cried the old maid.
"Go away or I'll set the dog on you!"
Cholly didn't pay the slightest attention to this.

In fact, he didn't hear it.

He was as dumb to it as if he had been in Jericho listening to the howling of the jackals.

The old maid yelled to him and requested him to move on.

Nixey move.

Instead, he began thrumming on his guitar.

Then he started in to sing some more.

"And making love to the old maid!"

"What a blamed fool!"

"Ta, ta, Cholly, deah boy!"

"Did you kiss Snipey good-bye?"

"He must be crazy."

Away went Cholly on the dead run, afraid of getting wet.

He had his guitar in his hand, but he had no idea how it got out of its case.

After him rushed Miss Snipe's dog, which she had liberated.

He took a sample of Cholly's trousers and then went back.

The dude didn't stop till he got right in the village where it was light.

Then he discovered that it wasn't raining a drop.



AWAY STARTED THE DEACON RIGHT FOR THE MAIN STREET. THERE WAS SURE TO BE A BIG CROWD OUT AT THAT TIME. THERE WAS FOR A FACT, AS MORT HAD JUST ASCERTAINED. WHEN THE DEACON WAS SEEN APPROACHING EVERYBODY WONDERED. SOME LOOKED AT THE SKY AND HELD OUT THEIR HANDS. THERE WASN'T THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF RAIN. NOT A CLOUD COULD BE SEEN.

She had heard the other verses of the song.

Not a syllable had missed her.

At first, however, she wasn't going to pay any attention.

She thought that if she kept still the horrid creature would go away.

The more he sang, however, the worse it got.

"Oh come to me, my Snipey, dear,
And kiss your honey boy,
You're sweeter far than lager beer,
You are my love and joy."

That was too much for the old maid.
All the neighbors were laughing and having lots of fun over the serenade.

Phoebe Jane chucked open the blinds, stuck out her head, and said:

"Go away, you loafer! How dare you?"

But Cholly never heard a word.

He took a fresh start instead.

"Beautiful screamer, lovely old Snipe,
Come and caress me this beautiful night,
Lay your false bangs close to my heart,

"Oh, won't you come and play in my yard,
Won't you love me any more,
I'll be sorry if you—"

That was as far as he got.

Swish!

Splash!

Biff!

Down came a pitcher of water on his head.

The pitcher followed, and got all broke up on the walk.

"There, you loafer! Just you stay around here any longer, and I'll—"

"All right, Cholly, all right. Get a move on you! Skip!"

The dude suddenly came around.

"Bah jaove, what a showah," he said.

"I shall have to huwwy, don't you know, or I shall get wet."

Then he dusted out of the yard in short order.

The spectators all laughed and began to guy him.

"Well, if it isn't that dude!"

"Bai Jaove, that's vevy queah," he remarked. "The showah didn't last very long."

Deacon Shouter was coming along just then.

He heard the dude's remark.

"Shaower!" he said, "why, there hain't been no shaower to-night."

"Aw, I beg pahdon, but don't you paw-celve how wet I am?"

"Wall, there hain't been no shaower, I tell yu."

"Aw, excuse me, but I got caught in it, and I ought to know, don't you know?"

"No, I don't know, and there hain't been none. Guess yu've been dreamin' young man."

Cholly couldn't make out why he was drenched, nor why he had the guitar out of its case.

He went off to his club rehearsal, and in ten minutes the story of his serenading scrape was all over town.

Cholly heard it before the rehearsal was over and denied it.

"No, sah, I nevah was theah," he said, most emphatically.

"But Miss Snipe has your guitar case and lots of fellows heard you singing."

"Aoh, but, bai Jaove, I cawn't sing, don't you know?"

"Yes, that's what the fellows said, that you couldn't sing a little bit."

"Ain't Miss Snipe rather old for you, Cholly?" asked one.

"You weren't looking for some one to adopt you, were you?"

"She'd be a grandmother to you, old man."

"And she's a peach, you know, you said so. Can't you give us that song again?"

"But I nevah sang any song, me deah fellahs," protested the dude.

It was of no use for Cholly to deny it, however.

There were too many who had seen him to make his denials go down.

And then, his name was on his guitar case.

More than that, Miss Snipe had a sample of his trousers.

They were unlike any in town.

Poor Cholly had to confess that if he had been serenading Miss Snipe, he must have taken too much ice cream soda that evening and it had gone to his head.

The story was repeated with variations, all over the village, and Miss Snipe threatened to horsewhip the unfortunate Johnnie if ever he came near her house again.

Mort never gave the thing away, but enjoyed Cholly's discomfiture immensely.

He thought he might as well make other fellows look ridiculous, however, as well as the dude.

It was the next day and a lot of the fellows had been guying the poor fellow in front of the store, when along came Holdover.

Mort sauntered along and just as he got in front of the judge, made a few sudden passes.

"Look out, Judge!" he cried impressively. "Look out for that mad dog!"

The judge instantly jumped as if he had had a nip taken out of his leg.

PART IX.

"RUN, you old fool, get up a tree, mad dog!" said Mort to the judge.

There was a tree close at hand. One limb stretched out over the road about twice as high as a man's head from the ground.

Up the tree shinned the judge, as lively as a cricket.

He thought sure a mad dog was after him.

Mort had got that idea well fixed in his head and it stayed.

Up the tree he went till he reached the projecting limb.

"Shin out there, you chump, or he'll catch you."

The judge straddled the limb in a hurry. "Further!" commanded the boy mesmerist.

Out on the limb went the judge till he was well over the road.

Mort stood on the walk with his eye fixed on the judge.

He seemed to be simply watching the old fellow to see what he would do next.

That wasn't all he was doing, however. He was keeping his victim hoodooed.

Nobody would get onto that, however. When the crowd came up—as it was bound to—Mort did not say a word.

He simply kept his eye and his mind fixed on the judge.

Well, up came the loungers on the street, wondering what ailed the judge. They all stood and stared at him.

"What yu dewin' there, jedge?" asked Deacon Shouter.

"Putty lively work for a man of your size, ain't it, jedge?"

"What yu found up there—a bird's nest?"

"Gosh! Never seen a man go up a tree as spry as that."

"What ails you anyhow, jedge?"

"He's mad, I tell you, look out, he'll bite, he's a mad dog," declared the judge.

Now there did happen to be a dog in the crowd.

He had come up to see what was going on.

Sitting on his haunches, he looked wisely up at the judge in the tree.

He was as harmless as an iron dog, however.

He wasn't mad and had no intention of being so.

He was simply a mongrel, a tramp, a good-natured nobody's pup.

Well, when the judge spoke about a mad dog, the crowd looked around.

They spied the harmless brute looking at the judge.

Some of them laughed and slapped their legs.

Others began to get nervous. These were women.

They hitched up their skirts and began to edge away.

"He ought not to be allowed around, he's dangerous."

"Somebody ought to shoot him and put him out of his misery."

"Where's a policeman? Where's Mr. Sniffen?"

Peleg Q. chanced to come along at that moment.

"What's that, who wants me?" he asked.

"There's a mad dog!"

"Shoot him, quick!"

"No, take him to the pound."

"The dog's mad!" howled Holdover again. "Look out, he'll bite!"

Then Peleg Q. saw the dog. He got on the outside the crowd at once.

Then he said: "Look aout, yu fellers, I'm goin' to shoot!"

Then Plug Cutt spoke up: "What you going to shoot at, Peleg?"

"Peleg Q., if yu please. I'm goin' to shoot the mad dog, of course."

"Where is he, Sniffen?"

"Mr. Sniffen, if yu please. Why, there he is."

"Why, he ain't mad."

"Yes, he is. He's the on'y dog here, ain't he? He must be mad."

"And you're going to shoot him?"

"Tu be sure."

"Then let me stand in front of him, that's the safest place!"

The gang laughed. Peleg Q. got very red in the face.

Then the judge howled again. "Take him away, he's mad."

Just then the dog barked. He had taken on some of the excitement of the crowd.

That made the women yell and run. Sniffen drew his pop.

The crowd got out of the way. Mort didn't care to have that dog shot.

So he fixed his eye on the copper. Peleg fired.

Up in the air. Nowhere near the judge, however.

The dog barked some more and ran off. Holdover yelled and held on to the tree.

"My word, Sniffen, where are you shooting? You'll hit me if you don't look out."

"Haow in time can I hit you when I'm shootin' at the dog?"

"But you weren't shooting at the dog."

"Yes, I was, b'gosh!"

"No, you weren't. There he is now, right in front of you."

The country copper jumped about six feet.

The hayseiders and others laughed. There wasn't a dog in sight.

"There he is, I tell you. Look out, he's foaming at the mouth—he's mad as a March hare."

Plug Cutt let out a huge guffaw. So did Joe West, his pal.

Others began to look sober and tap their foreheads.

"Well, I reckon it ain't a dog what's mad."

"No, I reckon they ain't."

"Guess it's you, Judge."

"Come off your perch, Judge."

Mort got his eye on him again. "Wow! there he comes! Look out, he's coming."

Holdover slid along that limb toward the further end.

It was a pretty strong limb at the start. Towards the end, however, it grew slimmer.

You couldn't expect that it was going to hold a fellow of the judge's size.

It didn't.

Snap!

Crash!

Thump!

It cracked, split, and then broke in two. At the first alarm the crowd scattered.

Half of them dashed into the road. That was lucky for Holdover.

Down he came on the heads of the run-aways.

Into the dusty road they all went tumbling.

Nobody was hurt. They all got mussed up, however.

Then Mort got his eye on the judge again.

"All right, judge; you're all right!"

In a jiffy the spell was over. Up got the judge, not knowing what had happened.

He thought that Jim Juggs had run against and knocked him down.

"Confound you, sir!" he said, indignantly. "can't you see where you are going? How dare you run into me in that fashion?"

"Wall, I reckon it was you what run into me, jedge, leastwise knocked me down."

"I knock you down? No sir, never!"

and the judge shook himself and stepped out of the road.

"Wall, I say you did, and other fellows besides, when yu fell aout of thet tree."

"Fall out of a tree! I haven't been up a tree, sir. What do you mean by 'up a tree?' I don't understand slang, sir."

"But, Your Honor, you were," said the deacon. "You were sitting straddle of that there limb, and it broke and let you down."

"Nonsense, sir! I climb a tree? Ridiculous! Why should I climb a tree?"

"Why to get rid of the supposed mad dog, of course, but there wasn't any—"

"Mad dog?" gasped the judge, glancing hastily around. "Where?"

"Never was any mad dog," blurted out Joe West. "Guess you got rattled, jedge, or had too much wine or suthin', and you seen things."

Then there was another laugh, and the judge walked away, looking very pompous and also very foolish, the two conditions usually going together.

The prevailing opinion in the village was that Holdover was going off his perch.

Others insisted that he drank, and among these was Wiggins.

He felt it his duty to go and see Holdover about it, even though he was not on speaking terms with the latter.

After the interview they were more distant than before.

Wiggins thought Holdover was the most obstinate man he had ever met.

Holdover considered Wiggins the biggest liar in town, and there the matter rested.

The parson had not seen the mad dog incident, but had only heard about it, while the judge denied that it had ever occurred.

Wiggins considered that his authority was good, however, and refused to take the judge's denial.

The upshot of the matter was that the breach between the two was widened, and they didn't speak to each other for weeks.

After the judge had gone away mad, Mort tried his hand on Plug Cutt.

He didn't do it immediately, however, as he wanted things to quiet down a little first.

Now Plug was a great lover of fast horses.

He didn't own any himself, but he liked to back them.

Especially when he was sure they would win.

He also liked to ride behind one, when he had the price.

Or if he could stand the livery man off a few days.

Everybody in town knew what a sport he was.

They were not prepared to find him going crazy on the subject of horses, however.

When things had pretty well quieted down, Mort managed to catch Cutt alone.

It was in front of the store, just by the rail, where horses were hitched.

Cutt came sauntering along, his hands in

his pockets, a straw in his mouth, and his high white hat on the back of his head.

"Good-day, Mr. Cutt."

"Morning, Mort."

"Pretty nice horse this, eh?"

"Pretty nice what? Oh, yes! I didn't see him first off. By George, yes, he's a daisy!"

"Looks as if he could go, too, doesn't he, Plug?"

Mort had his hand on the rail, and his eye on Plug.

"Yes, he does; he's a regular racer, I guess."

"Would you like to ride him, Plug?"

"Would I like to ride him? Well, you just bet I would!"

"All right, jump on. He's a bit skittish, but you ought to be able to handle him."

"Well, I'd just like to see the hoss I couldn't handle, Mort. Whoa, you durn critter!"

Mort made his customary passes, and fixed his eye firmer on Plug.

The sporty boy clapped his hand on the rail and vaulted upon it in a jiffy.

"Now then, Plug, let her go! You ought to get him up to a 2.10 gate. Let him out now!"

"Hi-hi, get along there!" shouted Plug.

Then Mort slipped aside.

"Keep a running, you brute, you ain't half going," shouted Plug.

Then he bent over, took the straw from his mouth, and slashed at the imaginary steed.

He really thought that he was on horseback and riding like the mischief.

He was as excited as could be, using imaginary reins, whip and spur in the most scientific manner.

"Hi! get along there, what are you stopping for? Get a gait on you! hi-hi!" he shouted, in the greatest excitement.

He was bound to attract attention.

A crowd collected in short order.

At first, people seemed to think Plug was fooling them.

"Hi-hi, now you're going it. That's the talk, doctor. I tell you, we'll win the race sure."

"Wall, I vaow!"

"Oh, he's just playin' off, ain't yu, Plug?"

"Playin' off nothin! This hoss is Doctor Rice and I'm going to win this race. Get along there, doc, you old plug!"

"Faster, Plug!" said Mort.

The sport used his imaginary whip with extra force, slashing about him like mad.

"Hi-hi, keep a moving, you old cow, we've got to win!"

"Wall, I'll be durned!"

The feller's as crazy as a June bug, b'gosh!"

"Durned if he ain't, by gosh!"

"Wall, sir, hosses has ruined him, sure enough!"

"The idee of takin' that thing for a hoss!"

"Reck'n he's hed tew much hard stuff this mornin', don't yu?"

"Guess he has."

"Faster, Plug!" said Mort, on the quiet. Everybody was paying so much attention to the supposed rider that they took no notice of Mort.

Plug got greatly excited, rose in his saddle, slashed with his whip, leaned over, lost his balance and fell in the dust.

Then there was a howl and no mistake.

"You've lost the race, Plug. Get up!"

"Well, I'm durned."

"I should say he had lost it."

"You're all right, Plug," said Mort.

Up got the sport, himself again.

He looked around, saw all hands laughing at him, brushed the dust off him, and said:

"Some of you fellows are pretty fresh, pushing me off the walk. If I knew who it was, I'd paste him!"

"Haow about the hoss you was ridin'? Didn't he throw you?"

"Hoss throw me? Hain't been ridin' no hoss. Guess you must be cracked. Who shoved me off, I'd like to know."

The crowd shook its heads and went away, convinced that Plug was crazy on the subject of horses, and it was a long time before they could be made to think different.

Somewhere about this time, Mort got up another racket on Denny Murphy.

Denny, being an Irishman, was a red-hot

enthusiast over the wrongs of Ireland, the tyranny of England and all that.

He hadn't a good word to say for the queen, and he hated the sight of an Englishman.

Mort concluded to roast Denny, accordingly, not dreaming of the result his snap would have.

He got a nice big piece of stiff card board to begin with.

Then he framed it with light wood so as to make it still firmer.

After that he mounted it on a long, light stick, like a transparency in a procession.

Next he lettered it in fine style with marking ink and brush.

The legend on that banner was not one which would appeal to every Irishman's heart.

On the contrary, it was more likely to stir up the most bitter animosity.

In fact, most Irishmen give utterance to a far different sentiment.

"What the card said was this:

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

Mort might have known that there would be trouble.

In fact, he did anticipate it, but not so much.

Well, he carried his signboard, carefully wrapped up, down into the village.

He met Denny near the judge's house, as he expected.

Then he hypnotized him.

That was an easy matter.

Denny was the easiest kind of a subject.

"Now then, Denny, you've got a new job."

"Yis, sor."

"You belong to the Salvation Army, Denny."

"Indeed I do, sor."

"And they hire you to carry the banner."

"Sure, it's a good mon they want for the job."

"And the parade is now about to start."

"So it is, sor."

"And you're at the head of the line."

"Faix, I'm the only mon fit for the place."

"And here's the banner."

"Oh, my, but ain't it foine."

"And you're going to take the sidewalk, right down the main street."

"Av coorse I am, sor."

"And now you're off! Forward march! Don't you hear the drums and fifes?"

"I do, sor, and they're beautiful, so they are."

"Salvation Army fall in, forward march! Get a move on you, Denny."

Off went Denny with the stick over his shoulder and the traitorous legend on high.

Mort kept conveniently near, but not too much so.

He could keep Denny mesmerized at a distance, easy enough.

It was necessary to stay right alongside to keep him hoodooed.

However, he wanted to see the fun.

He expected that there would be more or less of it.

At first Denny did not attract much attention.

Two or three fellows drove by, thought he was carrying some sort of an advertising sign, and didn't stop to read it.

Then he met the dude out for a walk.

Cholly immediately took off his hat.

"Bai jaove, this town is wapidly improving," he remarked. "That's quite English, don't you know!"

Next he met Miss Snipe.

She simply tossed her head and went on.

"The ideal!" she muttered. "As if any American wasn't as good as the queen!"

Then Denny encountered Plug Cutt, Joe West, and one or two other jovial fellows.

"Hallo, Murphy, what's that you've got?" asked the sport.

"Get out av the way for the Salvation Army," said Denny.

"The Salvation Army?"

"Yis! Av yez don't jine thim, yez will all go to destruction, begob!"

"H'm, that's putty good!" laughed the fellows.

Denny marched on and soon reached the store.

In front of it were seven or eight fellows loading.

That is to say, they were waiting to go to work.

They saw Denny coming—but could not at first make out what he had.

"Faix, that's a new job for Denny Murphy."

"Who'd iver thot he'd be a sandwich mon?"

"Faix, that's not a sandwich at all."

"Well, it's an advertoisin' desoign av some sort."

"Maybe the judge is runnin' for offus."

"An' that's to tell people av ut?"

"Yis, but the judge is a dom republikin."

"And Dinny is a thrue dimmycrat, begob!"

"Yis, like ivery l'yal Irishmon, faix."

"Av he wasn't, we'd slug um, so we would."

"Yis, but he do be votin' the shtraight dimmycratic ticket ivery toime."

"Thin phwat call has he to canvass the taown for the jedge, faix?"

"Ah, go on, maybe it isn't that at all, phwat he's carryin'."

"No, maybe it's some koin'd av soap he's advertoisin'."

"Or a picnic av th' Irish soci'ties."

"To be sure."

"Well, Denny came on with his mysterious sign."

He marched proudly by and paid no attention to any one.

The men got on to his sign before he passed.

Before he came they were all smiles.

When he approached, their smiles changed to black looks.

They all glared at him like enraged beasts.

"The impidence av um!" growled one.

"And he an Irishman," muttered another.

"How dar' he look a dacint mon in the face?"

"He's a rank thraitor, be heavens!"

"In the pay av the inemies av Ireland, begorrah!"

"Shame on him, the robber!"

Black looks, muttered execrations and clinched fists greeted Denny as he passed.

When his back was turned the storm broke.

That was the safest time to do anything.

"Begorrah, let's parlyze um!" they all cried in a breath.

Then, with one accord those brave men, eight of them, went for that one luckless Mick.

PART X.

THAT unfortunate Irishman with his incendiary sentiments had just passed by when his compatriots fell upon him.

"It's God save the queen, is it, ye thraitor?"

"Is that the way yez forget owld Ireland, ye robber?"

"Insult respectable Irishmen, will yez?"

"Begorrah, well learn yez to uphowld the tyrant."

"Slug um, the vilyan, there's eight av us to wan!"

"Kill um, the black-hearted British spoy!"

Poor Denny was in the midst of a fracas before he knew what had happened.

The gang of them set upon him at once.

They tore the sign from his fist.

They ripped it in a dozen pieces.

They pounded him with the stick.

Then they knocked him down.

And walked on him.

And wiped up the dust with him.

And blacked his eyes.

And made his nose bleed.

Then all hands jumped on him.

You couldn't see him for the crowd.

Nor tell one man from another.

They were all so mixed up.

Heads, legs, arms and bodies were all in a jumble.

The whole mass was struggling and writhing and rolling about.

Probably more than one blow intended for Denny was received by some one else.

An Irishman is never very particular in that regard.

So long as he mauls some one he doesn't much care who it is.

The love of fighting is born in him, and

if he can't find an enemy to fight, he will fight his friends.

Even if Denny did not get all the cracks meant for him, he got enough.

He couldn't miss them all and plenty of them connected.

Now Mort had no idea that the poor fellow would be so roughly handled.

In fact he did not know that there were so many patriots on the street.

He had really had no intention of having Denny Murphy murdered.

Up he came in a jiffy.

"Hi, hi, there's an Italian down the street kissing an Irish girl," he shouted. One or two of the gang heard him.

He got the fellows one at a time and alone.

He was stronger than any of them, besides.

After all he got considerable satisfaction out of the thing and was about even.

Mort had no more compunctions of conscience when he found that out.

In the meanwhile, however, he was having fun with other fellows.

One of these was Deacon Shouter.

Now the deacon was a steady, sober old duck, and never did anything out of the way.

People said that he was so good that he even objected to having the town clock strike on Sunday.

"And put on your rubber boots. Don't you know the gutters are knee deep?"

"Why, bless me, that's a fact. How it does rain, to be sure."

"Why, you'll get drenched just standing here."

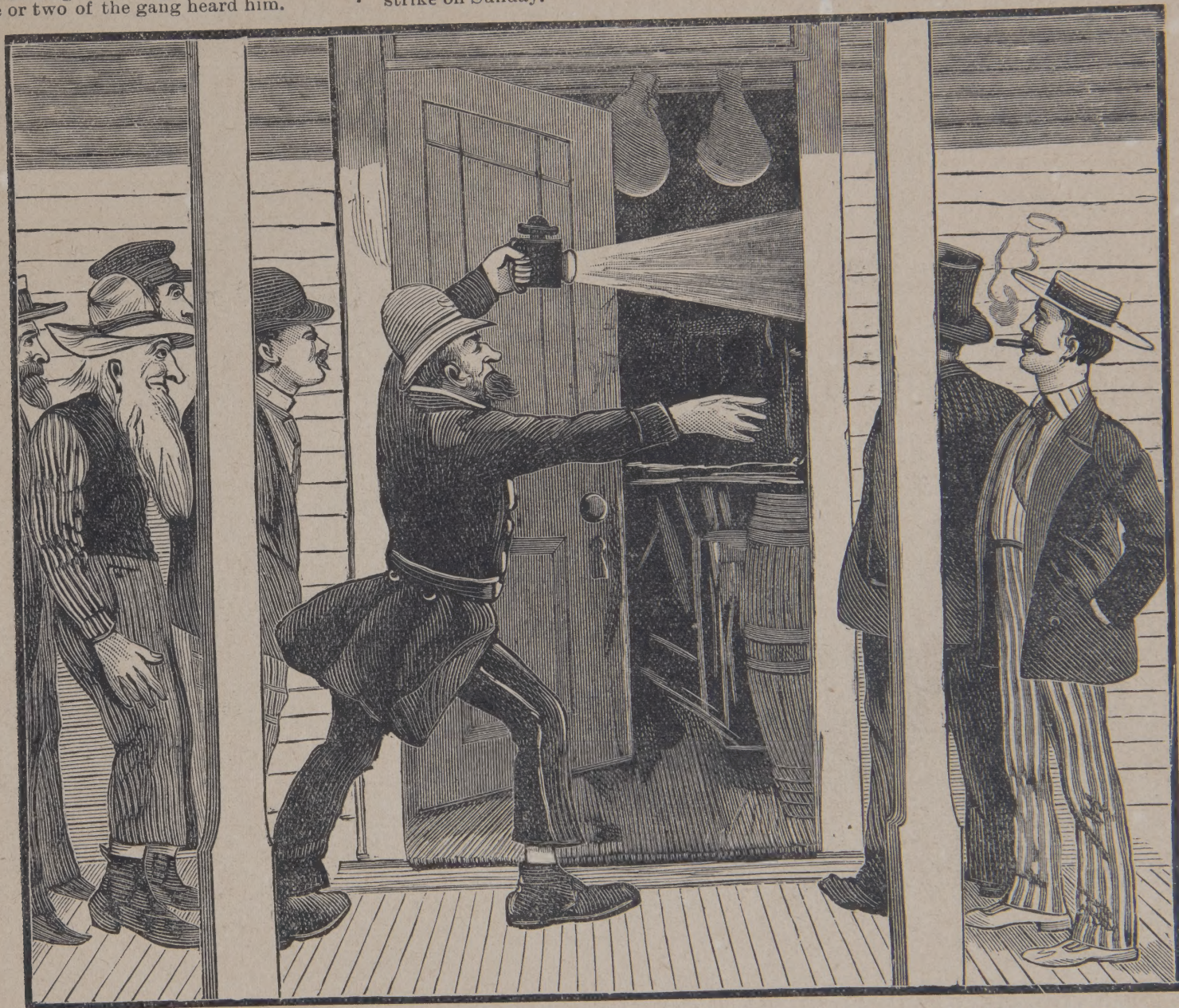
"Whew! That's so!" and the good man shook himself.

"And be sure you get your oilskins. You'll need 'em."

At one time the deacon had been captain of a coasting vessel.

He had given up the business when he joined the church.

It was impossible to get sailors to attend prayer meetings three times a day.



BY THE TIME HE REACHED THE BIG STORE THERE WAS A CROWD AWAITING HIM. THEY HAD HEARD ALL ABOUT HIS STRANGE CONDUCT FROM THE OTHER FELLOWS. PELEG WENT CAUTIOUSLY UP THE STOOP. HE FLASHED HIS LANTERN ABOUT, AND SEEMED TO BE LISTENING. THEN HE TRIED THE DOOR. IT OPENED EASILY ENOUGH, OF COURSE. "HA, ROBBERS!" MUTTERED PELEG.

* They desisted and put off down the street.

"Hi-hi, Denny, you're all right. Slug those fellows."

Denny came around at that.

He did slug them for a fact.

One by one they left him and he was soon alone.

The appearance of Sniffen on the scene may have had something to do with it.

"Phwat the piper did thim fellies slug me for, I wonder?" muttered Denny, as he went back to work.

He didn't remember a thing about the Salvation Army or carrying the banner or meeting Mort.

The whole thing was a blank in his mind.

Later on some of the boys explained why they had slugged him.

Then Denny licked them for accusing him of such treachery.

He could do it.

He wouldn't even have ginger pop made on the last of the week for fear of its working on the Sabbath.

He was always very staid and dignified, and never did anything ridiculous.

Consequently Mort considered him a good mark and decided to make him do something funny.

One bright, sunny afternoon just about this time, Mort met the deacon coming out of the house.

He was on his way to attend a temperance meeting or something of the sort.

Mort got at him just as he came out of the gate.

"Why, Deacon Shouter, don't you know it's raining?"

A few passes and a touch or two of the hands did the business.

"Why, dear me, so it is!" said the deacon.

"Go into the house, man, and get your umbrella or you'll get soaked."

"Why, yes, that's a good idea."

The ex-captain had kept his oilskins and sou'wester hat, however.

They were useful in bad weather.

Mort snapped his fingers at him and made some more passes.

"Hurry up there, Slow-coach!" he said.

Into the house went the deacon in a hurry.

In five minutes he came out again.

You would have thought there was going to be a flood by the way he was fixed.

He had on a full suit of oilskins, coat, breeches and sou'wester.

He wore high rubber boots, reaching nearly to his waist.

He also carried a big umbrella, open.

It would have accommodated a whole family, it was so large.

"Now you're fixed," said the boy mesmerist. "Geel but doesn't it rain!"

"Well, I just guess it does. My stars, it's a regular torrent!"

"But you're all right now, old man. You can't get wet the way you're fixed."

"No, you bet!"

"Now you're off, deacon! You're going through town, you know."

Snap!

Away started the deacon right for the main street.

There was sure to be a big crowd out at that time.

There was for a fact, as Mort had just ascertained.

When the deacon was seen approaching everybody wondered.

Some looked at the sky and held out their hands.

There wasn't the slightest sign of rain.

"Good-day, Miss Snipe. Won't you share my umbrella? I'm afraid you'll get drenched. Are you going far?"

The old maid looked as if she doubted the man's sanity.

"Drenched?" she repeated. "Why it's not raining now!"

"Why, yes, it is, the rain is just running off your bonnet in streams. You'd better come under my umbrella."

"Why, the man must be crazy!" snapped Snipe.

Then she got out of the way in a hurry. She was evidently afraid the deacon would bite next.

On went the good man, umbrella, boots, and all.

Plug looked at him to see if he could detect the faintest sign of a wink.

Nixey nictate.

"Oh, yes, quite a shower. Yes, you're quite right," he said, hurriedly.

What he thought was very different.

"What's the old sport giving me? Why, there ain't the first sign of rain."

"Going my way, Mr. Cutt?" continued the deacon. "If you be you can hev a part of this."

"No, thanks, deacon," and Plug dodged but had his high hat knocked off, all the same, by the deacon's umbrella.

"Oh, very well, Mr. Cutt, but you'd better get an umbrella if you mean to stay out. Why, you're soaked now."



THE OLD PLUG DIDN'T SEEM TO CARE MUCH FOR ORDERS. HE WENT AS HE PLEASED. SNIPE DID A GOOD DEAL OF BOBBING UP AND DOWN. EVEN THE SLIGHT MOTION THAT AGED NAG MADE WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER. SHE PULLED ON THE STRING FOR ALL SHE WAS WORTH, HOWEVER. THIS SEEMED TO INCENSE HER BUCEPHALUS. HE BRACED UP AND LET FLY WITH HIS HEELS.

Not a cloud could be seen.

The wind was west too.

Dacon Shouter was known as a weather prophet all over the town.

His sea-faring life had taught him all the signs.

It must be going to rain if he came out that way.

However, there did not seem to be any necessity of his having his umbrella up at that precise moment.

It wasn't raining just then, even it were going to do so.

Consequently people thought it strange to see him that way.

Everybody else had on linen suits, straw hats, russet shoes or outing shirts, and some even dispensed with coats.

The deacon's appearance, therefore, was in decided contrast to that of all hands.

"Good-afternoon, Deacon Shouter," said Miss Snipe, who was the first to meet him.

The next person he met was Plug-Cutt. He always had had an idea that he could convert that sporty individual some day.

Therefore he always spoke pleasantly to Mr. Cutt and Cutt liked him, even if he didn't line up with him.

"Mornin', deacon," said Plug, with a grin he could not conceal.

"Good-day, Mr. Cutt. Glad to see you," and Shouter put out his hand.

He was a regular Methodist for shaking hands, and did it on all occasions and without the slightest provocation.

"Been having some weather up your way, deacon, or goin' to, I reckon," said Plug, shaking hands.

He couldn't shake that grin of his, however.

That was bound to stick as long as he was looking at the deacon.

"Well, I should say we was having a pretty smart shower," said Shouter.

Plug stooped, picked up his hat, put it on and growled:

"Oh, I'm soaked, eh? What does the old duffer mean by that? Hain't had a drink since morning."

The deacon went on his way and soon came to where the crowd was the thickest. You know how country fellows stare at anything and everything?

Well, these fellows stared, but they did not stop at that.

They also made remarks.

"Durned ef the dekin hain't lost some of his buttons."

"Jew ever see the beat o' that, now?"

"Pears ter me he's just clean cracked."

"What you got your umbrella up fur, deacon?"

"Spect it'll dew tu keep the sun off, but yu don't need boots fur that, I don't think."

"Quite some rain, hey?" said the deacon.

"This ought to do the crops good, though it's pretty heavy too."

Mort was still around.

He could be there without exciting suspicion.

That's how the deacon got his fresh ideas about the rain.

Mort kept him well supplied by a mere effort of the will.

It wasn't necessary to tell him things out loud to make him believe them.

Thinking them and making the deacon think them was enough.

You see Mort had greatly improved as a mesmerist.

Besides that, Deacon Shouter was a first class subject.

When he began to talk about the rain and all that, the hayseeds were surprised.

Then they shook their heads.

Some of them laughed at the comical sight, but the majority were grieved.

As the deacon went on, one of these muttered:

"Wall, if he ain't aout of his head he's the biggest liar I ever see."

"Reckon he's gone crazy on religion and is aout of his head," said one of the laughers.

The others scouted such an idea and the scoffer was silenced.

The deacon went on his way and met Holdover, Wiggins, Sniffen, Joe West and others.

To all he remarked upon the weather and expressed a fear that they would get wet, being without umbrellas.

The judge snorted and said:

"H'm! that's what the Methodist church does for a man! He's either crazy or lying like sin!"

Parson Wiggins was deeply grieved and remarked to himself:

"Dear, dear, he must have overworked himself. What a pity."

As for Peleg Q. Sniffen he shook his head and muttered:

"Guess somebody orter order a stret jacket fur the dekin. Didn't like ter arrest him, but I guess I'll hev ter, ef he goes on like thet."

Mort turned the deacon around at last and started him back home by another street.

Then he left him, not far from his house, and said:

"Good-bye, old man. When you get to the gate you'll know a donkey you've made of yourself."

Just as Deacon Shouter put his hand on the gate he came to himself.

He looked at himself, at the sky, at the ground and at the trees.

There hadn't been any rain, and there wasn't going to be.

Shutting up his circus tent umbrella, he muttered:

"Wall, by gravy, ef I hain't the dumbest fool in the hull taown!"

That was the nearest to swearing that the good man had been in five years.

His wife heard it, having come out to meet him.

She was terribly shocked and said:

"Why, Deacon, did you know you swore?"

"Wall, mebbly I did," said the deacon, "but I guess I had a call to—whatever possessed me to rig up like this when there ain't no sign o' rain, I can't imagine."

His wife thought that she could.

She had had visitors.

Three or four kind-hearted friends had already hastened to let her know that her husband was losing his grip.

There are always plenty of that sort around.

The deacon was puzzled, but he got off his duds just the same and went to the meeting.

Later in the day a lot of fellows got to roasting him about his afternoon freak.

Mort was around and heard them.

He made up his mind to make them do something funny and let the deacon have satisfaction.

The next day it did rain.

It rained for keeps too.

Cats and dogs weren't to be mentioned.

It simply poured.

In a jiffy the streets were like rivers.

Everyone who was out ran for cover.

Umbrellas were at a discount.

They were simply useless.

Mort was out in the rain.

In fact he had seen it coming.

That's why he went out.

He was bent on fun.

And to give the deacon satisfaction.

He was all right, however.

He had on a rubber coat and boots.

He also wore a rubber hat.

You wouldn't often catch him napping.

Well, he got to the store at last.

Here he found three or four loungers.

They were all the easy kind.

A few glances, a few passes, and the thing was done.

"Hi! What are you doing here when the sun is shining so bright? Get out and enjoy it."

Two of them went out in the rain.

"Hi, there, Bub Jones," to another,

"get in that hammock."

The hammock in question was in a yard next door.

It was under the trees but it was soaked.

Bub Jones went and lay in the hammock.

"Hollo there, Wayback, go and water those flowers. Don't you see they're drying up?"

The flower bed was close to the fence near the hammock.

Wayback lived in the house and had come out to look at the rain.

Away he went, got a big watering pot, and began to sprinkle the flowers.

Then Mort got at the storekeeper.

He made him haul up his awnings to keep off the sun.

A fellow across the way got out his hose and began to sprinkle the road.

Mort simply made him do it.

Then Holdover came out just because Mort hoodooed him.

He walked across the road in his shirt sleeves.

Just then the rain was at its worst.

While all these funny things were going on along came Shouter.

It was just his luck.

This time he was prepared for the rain.

"Well, judge, 'pears to me that you're doing a funny thing."

"Awful hot, isn't it? I can scarcely breathe."

"Well, I never!" said the deacon.

Then he called to the fellow in the hammock.

"I say, Bub, ain't you 'fraid you'll catch cold?"

"Catch cold—a hot day like this? Well, I guess not."

"Well, of all things!" gasped the deacon.

Then he turned to Wayback.

"Reckon that's a sorter useless job you're doin," neighbor."

"Useless, eh, with the sun just scorching them plants?"

It was the same with the rest of them.

They all declared that they were doing just the right thing.

Then out of the tavern came Plug Cutt, with an umbrella over his head.

A walk of a few minutes showed him all the sights.

"Well, I never did," he chuckled. "Say, deke, they thought you was cracked yesterday, but I reckon you've got the bulge on them to-day."

Then the dignified deacon just let out a guffaw.

"Goshamighty, reckon I hev, Plug," he shouted. "This here beats me all holler."

The fun of it was that Plug and the deacon were not the only ones who saw the fun.

Everybody in the neighborhood nearly, took it in.

Their windows looked out on the main street, and they were at them watching the rain.

"You fellows will come to your oats in just two minutes," said Mort, "and then you'll see what big fools you are. This scores you, deacon."

—

PART XI.

It was still raining when the time limit that Mort had given the hoodooed hayseeds ran out.

It was not only raining, but doing it for all it was worth.

Of a sudden several persons realized that they were making themselves objects of derision.

Bub Jones tumbled out of the hammock.

Wayback dropped his watering pot.

The man with the hose took it in.

The storekeeper hauled up his awnings.

Holdover made a bolt for the house.

Deacon Shouter just laughed.

"Well, I ain't the only fool in this town," he remarked. "Guess you fellows won't hev so much to say naow."

They didn't.

Everybody roasted them worse than they had roasted the deacon.

The judge was so ashamed that he didn't leave the house for two whole days.

There was another fellow whom Mort enjoyed roasting.

This was Sniffen, the country cop.

Peleg Q. was such an important person in his own estimation, that Mort determined to give him a good one.

It was three or four days after the rain storm racket, and people had got over laughing at the judge and the rest.

It was a bright, shiny day, early in the forenoon, when there were a good many people about.

Mort met Sniffen on the street, being on the watch for him.

Peleg was walking along with his nose in the air, feeling awfully big.

His uniform didn't fit him, his hat was too small, and he had big feet.

For all that, he thought himself the finest peach on the tree.

When on duty he would not deign to speak to any one unless it was to blow them up.

"Hollo, Peleg!" said Mort.

Sniffen was going by without paying the young fellow any attention.

"Hollo, you old stuff!" said Mort.

Then Peleg looked down.

That was what Mort wanted.

He just wanted to get the copper's eye.

In half a jiffy he had him dead to rights.

"Pretty dark, isn't it, Peleg?"

"Well, I jest reckon it is."

"What do you mean by going out without your dark-lantern?"

"By gum!" said Peleg.

"Go straight home and get it. Don't you know there are burglars about?"

"By gosh, cap, don't say nothin' about it," said Peleg.

"All right, I won't, but go right home this minute and get it and be sure it's lighted and that there's plenty of oil in it."

"All right, sir," said Sniffen, and off he started for home.

Mort followed him so as to keep his eye on him.

When he came out he had his lantern and his night club.

"Now, then, you're on duty and on the lookout for thieves," said Mort.

"Yu just bet I am, and—"

Snap!

Two or three passes.

Then a motion as if pitching a ball.

Sniffen winked.

Then he forgot all about Mort.

It was just as if he didn't see or hear the boy mesmerist.

That's one part of the science of mesmerism.

You can make a fellow utterly oblivious to your presence.

"Peleg Sniffen, you're an old stuff," said Mort.

Peleg paid no attention.

"You're mean enough to arrest your shadow for being out at night without a latch key."

Still Peleg paid no attention.

He didn't even seem to hear the boy mesmerist.

Mort walked alongside him and stepped on his foot.

He never appeared to notice it.

Then Mort kicked him.

It was just the same.

"Peleg, you're the biggest liar out of jail, bar none."

You would have thought Peleg would resent that.

He didn't.

He didn't hear it, apparently.

"You're a worse dude than Cholley Smith, Peleg."

That country copper went right on and never said a word.

Mort had him hoodooed.

He didn't know Mort, he never saw him, he didn't hear him.

Mort had got it into his head that he had gone away.

Peleg believed himself to be alone, at night, patrolling the town.

Mort threw two or three more imaginary balls at him and let him go.

He followed, of course, but not too close.

In the immediate neighborhood of the store, there were several others.

It was the store, but they were just stores.

place with the cat-like tread you read about.

By the time he reached the big store there was a crowd awaiting him.

They had heard all about his strange conduct from the other fellows.

Peleg went cautiously up the stoop.

He flashed his lantern about, and seemed to be listening.

Then he tried the door.

It opened easily enough, of course.

"Ha, robbers!" muttered Peleg.

Then he stood alongside the door and blew a whistle.

"Yu bet I'll catch 'em when they come aout," he said.

Then the crowd laughed.

"H'm, guess I'll try that myself," chuckled Plug Cutt.

"Do," said Mort with a smile.

Then he suddenly waved his hand at Peleg.

Nobody seemed to notice it.

Plug went up behind Peleg and kicked him.

Quick as a wink Peleg turned around and whacked Plug across the jaw.

"That's all right, Peleg!"

Plug was greatly astonished at the result of his experiment.

Peleg suddenly came to himself and saw the gang laughing at him.

"Here, yu just get aout o' here. We



THE PLAZZA RAN WITH WATER, AND NOW AND THEN DENNY MURPHY MISSED FIRE AND TURNED HIS HOSE ON ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE SPECTATORS. MR. MERRY EMPTIED A PAIL OF WATER DOWN JUDGE HOLDOVER'S BACK BY MISTAKE. CHOLLY SMITH KNOCKED PLUG CUTT'S HIGH HAT OFF WITH A STREAM OF WATER IN THE SAME MANNER. DENNY MURPHY SOAKED THE PARSON AND HE WASN'T A BAPTIST EITHER, AND MRS. MERRY GAVE SNIPE A REGULAR DRENCHING.

ey were not so big and they did not contain so large an assortment of goods.

They had almost as many loungers around them, however, as "the" store.

These roosters were presently surprised to see Peleg come along, a dark lantern in one hand and a big club at his belt and try the door of one of them.

"Sh! not a word and I'll nab 'em," said Peleg.

Then he shot his light into the dark corners, and went on with a five-act-tragedy-Henry Irving stride.

"Wall, ef that don't beat all, by gosh!"

Peleg paid no attention, but went on.

He shot the light up an alley, put his hand to his ear, and seemed to be listening.

Then he went on to the next store, shook the door, and sent in the light of his lantern.

From here he proceeded to the next

"Well, ef that ain't the durndest I ever see!"

"I guess Peleg hain't got all his senses, b'gosh!"

Out came the proprietor to see what the trouble was.

Peleg grabbed him.

"I've got ye, by durn! Yu come to the station house."

The proprietor shook off the hayseed copper's grasp and said:

"You big caow, what's eatin' you? Ain't I the owner of this here store? What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, excuse me," and Peleg went on.

"Wall, I'm blowed! Guess he must be asleep."

"Of course he is," said Mort, coming along. "See here."

With that he gave Peleg a lunging old kick under the coat tails.

The country copper never noticed it.

can't hev no loafin' araound here, I tell yu."

"What you got the light fur, Sniffen?"

"Find the burglars in the daytime, did you, Peleg?"

"You're a dandy, you are."

"Guess you want ter be chief o' police or sher'f, or something."

Peleg looked at his lantern, his club and himself, and seemed greatly puzzled.

Then he walked away without saying a word.

He struck a bee line for home, the jeers of the crowd saluting his ears.

"Wall, I'll be blowed! Durned ef I hain't been walkin' in my sleep in the day 'me."

Some of the fellows believed that story.

Others had their doubts.

There were various reasons assigned as the cause of Peleg's strange conduct.

Some said it was too much hard cider.

Some said that Peleg was cracked in the upper story.

Others said he did it all for a joke.

Whatever opinion they had, however, everybody talked about the matter.

Peleg tried to explain, but the more he explained the worse he made it.

Then he tried to bluff the whole thing off and said he'd been fooling all hands.

That didn't go down and Peleg Q. got the grand laugh.

The only thing he could do after that was to fall back upon his dignity and say nothing.

That's what he should have said in the first place, if he had known when he was well off.

"Donno what's struck this here town," remarked Plug Cutt, when the laugh on Peleg began to subside, "most folks seem to have gone clean crazy. Never did see the beat of the redic'ulous things folks are doing."

"You hain't done none, hev you, Peleg?" asked Joe West.

"Me? No, o' course not."

"How 'bout ridin' that hoss t'other day?"

"Oh, I was on'y foolin' that day."

"Yes, same as Peleg," chuckled Joe, and the laugh was on Plug.

After that he didn't say so much.

As it seemed to be the fashion for the steadiest as well as the toughest citizens in town to do extraordinary things, Mort concluded to keep the ball rolling.

He was having lots of fun on a scientific basis, and it would never do to let the thing drop.

The next fellow he tackled, however, was an easy one, as he concluded to give the big bugs a rest for a time.

Sam Bing, the Chinese laundryman, had been going on undisturbed for some time, and Mort concluded that it was now his turn to furnish amusement for the crowd.

He could have played any number of first-class practical jokes on the Mongolian, and never have been suspected, but he preferred to keep his hand in as a mesmerist.

Sam was waddling along the street one afternoon, with a basket of clothes on his arm.

Mort met him, and began at once to hypnotize him.

"Your girl is coming, Sam. You want to make love to her."

Then there was the usual mysterious business.

"Your girl is right behind me, Sam. Ask her to marry you."

"All light, me do."

There was a girl not far behind Mort, for a fact.

She was Irish.

It was her Thursday out.

She was gotten up stunningly.

Mort stepped aside.

Along came Sam.

Plunk!

Flop!

Down went the basket on the ground.

Sam went upon his knees.

Right in front of the Irish girl.

Then he seized her hand.

Smack!

He gave it a sounding kiss.

Then he looked up.

"You mally me, nicee gal?"

That's what he said.

He also smiled.

One of those extra large smiles of his.

It was a perfect paralyzer.

The Irish girl nearly fainted.

Then she yelled.

Smack!

That was not a kiss.

It was a cuff alongside the ear.

Sam didn't like cuffs of that sort.

The Irish girl had a big fist.

She also knew how to use it.

"Take thot, ye haythen!"

"Me lovee you velly much."

"Yez do, do yez?"

"Yeppee, me do. You mally me?"

"Oh, the robber!"

Sam had taken another smack.

Then the Irish girl gave him one.

On the mug.

It nearly drove his face in.

Then she pulled her hand away.

Next she raised her foot.

Biff!

The basket got it.

It rolled over seven times.

Everything in it spilled out.

"How dar ye, ye vilyan?"

Several persons had seen the fracas.

One was Denny Murphy.

Sam had been sparking his girl.

He naturally objected.

Up he rushed as mad as a hornet.

He just meant to paralyze Sam.

Mort had other intentions.

"Soak him, Denny," said his girl.

Denny hauled off with his right.

Then Mort looked at him.

Snap!

Denny's arm was stiff.

He couldn't move it.

"Phwy don't yez hit um, Denny?"

"Sure I can't."

"And why?"

"Faix I'm parlyzed."

"Phwat have yez been dhrinkin?"

"Nothin', faix."

"Thin pwhat parlyzes yez?"

"Begob I don't know."

Poor Denny was puzzled.

He couldn't get his arm down.

Neither could he strike with it.

That was Mort's doings.

It was simply mesmerism, that's all.

The young fellow was improving, however.

"All right, Sam," he said.

Sam suddenly came around.

"Hi-ya, who do dat?"

He referred to the scattered clothes.

Denny stood before him.

He must of course be the culprit.

That was enough.

Denny's attitude was also against him.

"Hi-ya, me fixee you."

Biff!

Sam could hit if Denny couldn't.

It was the Chinese's turn, anyhow.

Mort liked fair play.

Sam had been struck two or three times.

Now it was his innings.

He landed a three bagger on Denny's jaw.

Over went that Irishman kerflop.

"All right, Denny."

Denny thought it was all wrong.

The mystic words had their effect, however.

Denny could use his arm now.

Up he got, determined to do so.

Sam saw him coming.

He got out of the way.

"Whattée mattee wis Ilishman?"

"I'm goin' to soak yez, that's phwat."

"Whattée for?"

"Because yez hit me."

"You kickee ovee baskee, spillée clothee, firstee loff, me no likee."

"Ye're a loiar! I did not. I c'ot ye makin' love to me girrul."

"Whattée dat? Me makee lub to Ilish gal?"

"Yez did, and axed her to marry yez, and kissed her hand, so yez did."

Sam lifted his eyelid, winked and said:

"Me guessee you clazy. Me no likee Ilish gal, me no mally suppose she covee all over wis dollée billee."

"Yez wudn't?" and Denny rolled up his sleeves. "For why wudn't yez marry her?"

"No goodee, dattee why," and Sam chuckled.

"Not good enough for a Chinese, is ut?" howled Denny, as mad as hops.

Such a thing was entirely beyond his comprehension.

It made his girl as mad as it made him.

"Begob, yez'll hov to marry her now, ye yaller slob!"

"Smash the crooked eyes av him, Denny, for his impidence!"

"Yeppee he do—me don't think."

There was a crowd around now waiting to see the fun.

Most of them would have liked to see a good scrapping match between those two.

Peleg Sniffen happened along, however, just then.

He had a decided objection to anything of the sort.

It was against the law, and as he represented the law, it was a direct affront to him to do anything of the sort.

He stepped up, as big as life, pushed his way into the ring, and said:

"Hey, yu fellers can't fight here, b'gosh."

"He med love to me girrul," said Denny.

"H'm! he orter get licked for that, sartin."

"Then let me get at him."

"Yas, anybody what's fule 'nuff ter spark an Irish gal, ain't got sense ter last him over night, by gosh."

Denny didn't expect an answer of that sort.

Sniffen didn't like the Irish and he made no bones of letting it be known.

The crowd laughed and Denny felt foolish.

"Datee light, coppee tellee sling stlaight datee time," chirped Sam.

Then he recovered the rest of his washing and waddled off.

"Faix, then, av yez won't let me foight um yez'll hov to arrest um," said Denny.

"What fur?"

"He hit me."

"What jew want tu let him fur?"

"Begob, I couldn't help meself."

"Wall, ef yu don't move on I'll run yu in for bein' crazy. A feller what'll let a Chinaman hit him must be cracked."

This was another injustice to old Ireland, and all hands laughed.

Peleg scattered the crowd, however, somebody asking him where his dark lantern was these days.

Denny went away to find his girl, but she gave him the cold shake because he hadn't walloped the Chinaman.

The crowd dispersed itself, but it presently gathered again to see some more fun.

This was of Mort's making as well as the other.

The boy mesmerist had not waited to see the outcome of the trouble between Sam Bing and Denny Murphy.

He had strolled off and had met Miss Snipe, coming down the street at a mincing gait.

It was some time since he had had any fun with Phoebe Jane.

"Hallo, Snipe!" he said, with a wink and a snap, and a sudden flirt of the hand.

"Good-day," said Snipe.

"You ought to ride, instead of walk, Snipe."

"H'm, ride a horse you mean?"

"Sure, Mike!"

"Never rode a horse in my life," snapped Snipe.

"Then it's time you learned," said Mort. "Come on, I'll give you a lesson."

PART XII.

THAT old maid went straight to the livery stable.

Mort did not go with her, however.

Instead of that, he put into her head just what she was to do.

He told her and made her repeat it to him.

She didn't know what she was saying no more than nothing.

The idea was in her head, however, and was bound to stay there.

Mort just soaked all his mesmeric force into her mind so that it would stick.

Well, she went off to the livery stable, which was not far away.

"I want a horse to ride," she said.

"Yes'm, very well, mum," said the boss, wondering what was going to happen.

"I want a horse that won't run away with me, either."

"All right, mum; I've got just the sort you want. He won't run away with nobody."

The liveryman was something of a wag himself.

The horse he picked out for Miss Snipe would certainly not run away with her.

He would scarcely walk, much less run.

He was skittish and cranky and balky, and just about played out in the bargain.

If he had had any go left in him, he would have kicked and bitten and shied, but he hadn't.

He could move and that was about all.

In fact, he was about the worst looking plug of a horse you ever saw.

Well, the liveryman had that plug of a horse brought out.

Then one of the men started to saddle it.

"That ain't the way," said the old maid. The attendant looked somewhat puzzled.

"Put it on the other way," ordered Miss Snipe.

The other way was backwards. The stable man looked as if he had not understood.

"Put it on the other way, I tell you," said the old maid. "I guess I know which way I'm going."

The boss winked and chuckled, but said: "Do as the lady says, John."

John put the saddle on hind end foremost as directed.

"Now give me a piece of string or rope, or something," said Snipe.

A bit of stout cord was brought and fastened under and around the horse's tail.

It was all that the boss and the men could do to hold in from laughing.

"Now give me a lift," said Snipe.

One of the men gave her a foot up and she got in the saddle.

It was a side saddle, for that old maid would never do such an unwomanly thing as to straddle a horse.

"Get up, click-click-click, get up!" said Snipe.

The old nag went out of the yard at a walk.

That did not suit Snipe.

"Get up," she said, with the utter disregard for vowels that women have, at the same time yanking on the string.

The plug increased his speed about one per cent.

It was just as well that he did not go much faster.

Phoebe Jane had never ridden a horse in her life.

If this one had gone faster, it is doubtful if she could have remained on.

"G'long there!" she said, with another yank.

The horse simply went less slow, for you couldn't call it fast.

Pretty soon he got out on the road.

The stable was not far from the store.

The crowd that Peleg had dispersed quickly reassembled.

Here was more fun for it.

"Wall, I take my beans!"

"Hey, fellers, just look o' thet!"

"Wall, I'm durned!"

"Git on to the cirkis!"

"Wall, I swan to man!"

"Hi, Plug, cu'd yer ride like thet?"

"She'll git there, by gosh, ef she keeps on."

"Where in time be she going any-haow?"

"Wall, I guess she's goin' t'other way, whichever yu say."

"Get up, there, click-click!"

The nag broke into the slowest kind of a run.

The old maid went bobbing up and down at a great rate.

"Hi-hi, get along there!" yelled some one.

"Whoa, mule!" shouted some one else.

"Clear the track there, fellers!"

"Git aout the way, can't yu? Dew yu wanten be run over?"

"Get up, you old plug."

The old plug didn't seem to care much for orders.

He went as he pleased.

Snipe did a good deal of bobbing up and down.

Even the slight motion that aged nag made was too much for her.

She pulled on the string for all she was worth, however.

This seemed to incense her Bucephalus. He finally braced up and let fly with his hind heels.

Snipe was nearly pitched over upon his neck.

The saddle slipped and shifted but didn't turn over fortunately.

"Whoa!" yelled some one.

This time the nag obeyed.

Simply because he didn't want to go any further.

It would have been the same if he had been told to go on.

Everybody was laughing and having no end of fun.

The general impression was that Snipe had less of her buttons than usual.

"Durn me, if she ain't as crazy as a June bug."

"Never was over well balanced, I guess."

"Guess she's been to too many revival meetin's," said Plug Cutt, who was not a

member in good standing or any other kind, of the church.

Plug's remark shocked some and made others laugh.

Mort just now concluded that Snipe had been roasted sufficiently.

"Oh, she's all right, all right," he said, with an accent on the all right. "Hi-hi, all right!"

At that Phoebe Jane recovered herself.

When she saw where she was she let out a yell.

"Oh, oh, take me off, take me off. I shall fall, I know I shall. Oh, oh, wee-ee-ee!"

Anything but a wooden horse, and the one Snipe rode would have been rattled at the screams she let out.

He simply stood still and began cropping the grass by the side of the road.

Then the old maid slid off.

She wasn't hurt a bit, but she yelled all the same.

The crowd only laughed.

Snipe couldn't imagine how she came to be on the back of that horse.

She couldn't remember a thing about it, and only one person could tell her and he wouldn't.

Everybody thought she was off her trolley, and said so.

Phoebe Jane did not waste words on them.

She just hustled out of there as fast as she could go and went about her business.

The old nag finally got tired and went back to the stable.

Then the boss sent a bill for one hour's horse hire to Miss Snipe.

She refused to pay it, denying that she had hired a horse.

The stable keeper said she had, and threatened to sue her.

She told him to go ahead and sue, and much good might it do him.

He did sue, and the case came up before Holdover the next day.

Phoebe Jane hired a lawyer, and so did the livery man.

Neither was good for much, but they were equal to the judge.

The court room was crowded at the appointed time.

The stable man had subpoenaed a dozen or twenty witnesses.

Snipe didn't have any.

She didn't think she needed any.

Her word was as good as the livery man's, she claimed.

She hadn't hired a horse, and she knew she hadn't, and she wasn't going to pay for any.

Well, as I said, the court-room was packed.

Nearly everybody in town was there to see the fun.

They were sure they would have some, and they didn't mean to miss it.

Mortimer Merry was there, of course.

He had hoodooed Sniffen into giving him a seat with the reporters and lawyers.

The town paper, the County Organ, had representatives there.

The case was considered a celebrated one, and nobody wanted to miss it.

Mort had a pad and pencils in front of him, presumably for taking notes.

They were simply for bluffing purposes, that's all.

"Bulger against Snipe, suit for damages," said Holdover, after beating a tattoo on his desk with the gavel.

"Miss Snipe, if you please, Phoebe Jane Snipe," said the old maid, "I'm not going to be called plain Snipe by any one."

"That is merely the title of the action, Miss Snipe," said Holdover. "No disrespect is intended."

"But I won't be called Snipe!" declared Phoebe Jane. "If the suit is against Snipe, it doesn't mean me, and I won't pay any attention to it."

"Your Honor," said the lady's lawyer, "I think we can easily stretch a point, and—"

"I won't have any points stretched," sputtered Snipe. "I want my rights, and I'm going to have them."

"Case of Bulger vs Phoebe Jane Snipe, called," said Holdover, and the old maid subsided.

Then Bulger's lawyer got up and began calling witnesses.

These swore that they had heard Snipe

call for a horse, give directions for his harnessing, get on his back, ride out of the yard, appear on the street, et cetera.

The case seemed to be going against Snipe, for many of the witnesses were reputable persons.

Then Mort caught the judge's eye. He fixed it, too, and telegraphed certain ideas over to the judge.

Presently, Holdover looked very wise, quite owl-like, in fact, and said:

"Ahem! I propose to give the case to the jury at this point without hearing any more evidence."

"But your Honor," began the old maid lawyer, "I wish to show that—"

Snap!

Mort chuckled a handful of imaginary dust in his eyes and he sat down.

Then Holdover went on.

"I merely wish to ask the plaintiff," he said, glaring at Bulger over the rims of his gold eye-glasses, "if the animal he is alleged to have hired to Miss Snipe is the one usually called 'Colonel Budge,' that's all?"

"Yes, your Honor, it was the 'Colonel' that she hired."

"Then the case is dismissed," said Holdover.

Snipe and her lawyer exchanged smiles. Bulger's lawyer began to protest.

The judge rapped for order.

"This action is laid for failure to pay a bill incurred for horse hire," he said.

"Well, I find the defendant was not supplied with a horse at all. The animal called 'Colonel Budge,' is not a horse at all, he is nothing but an old plug. The plaintiff has no case whatever. Clear the court!"

Bulger was furious. Phoebe Jane was delighted, and the crowd very hilarious.

The judge had given his decision and there was nothing more to be done at that time.

"Gee whiz! I didn't think the judge had so much sense," said Joe West.

"By gavy, that's the best decision I ever heerd," said Shouter.

"There ain't no flies on Judge Holdover," declared Jim Jiggs. "Ef I was Miss Snipe I'd sue Bulger fur defamation of character, b'gosh!"

In the confusion Mort got his eye on Phoebe Jane.

In a jiffy she was mesmerized.

Suddenly, to everyone's surprise, the old maid rushed up to Holdover, threw her arms about him and gave him a resounding smack.

"You dear old thing," she gushed, "I think you are just too splendid. I knew I'd win the case if you had hold of it."

The judge was not a little surprised at this outburst on the part of the defendant.

He had not even known that the case was settled.

Mort had only that instant taken the hoodoo off him.

"Really, Miss Snipe!" he gasped.

His wife was in court and she was awfully jealous.

She let out a yell and started to her feet.

Then Mort snapped his fingers at Snipe.

She let go of the judge and left the court.

Everybody she passed had a grin on his face.

Mrs. Wiggins, the parson's wife, presently stopped her.

"I presume you were glad to win your case, Miss Snipe," she said, "but don't you think that that was rather a remarkable demonstration?"

"What was there remarkable about it, Mrs. Wiggins? I think that the judge showed more sense than he has ever shown in all his life."

"Well, yes, to be sure, but I don't mean that, I mean your way of showing your joy at winning the case."

"I am not aware that I did any more than thank him, Mrs. Wiggins, said Snipe primly.

"Well, yes, I suppose you can call it that, but don't you think you could have been less effusive, my dear?"

"What are you talking about, Sister Wiggins?" snorted the old maid.

"Why, kissing the judge before everybody, of course."

The old maid let out a screech.

"Kissing the judge before everybody?"

"Yes."

"Who did?"

"Why, you did, of course."

Miss Snipe glared at the parson's wife to see if she were perfectly sober.

"There are some jokes which are exceedingly bad taste, Mrs. Wiggins," she said, "and this is one of them."

Then she pranced off on her high horse, and on the following Sunday she went to another church.

Holdover did not know that he had decided the case until he saw the stenographer's report of the same.

He did not understand it, but he kept still all the same.

"Must have been asleep when I said that," he thought. "However, it'll make my reputation as an after dinner speaker and I won't give myself away."

Everybody thought it the wittiest thing Holdover had ever said, and no one had ever given him credit for being so clever.

They all thought it was a good joke on Bulger and the latter paid his costs with a good grace, as he had the laugh on the judge after all.

If Holdover ever alluded to the matter, he could ask him how he liked being kissed by an old maid, and the account would be even.

Holdover got hauled over the coals by his wife for allowing Snipe to kiss him, but he declared that he really couldn't help it, and that he didn't know what she was up to.

The whole business made fun for all hands, and it was weeks before people in town got over talking about it.

In the meantime, however, Mort went right on having fun.

He had too big a cinch not to take advantage of, and he worked it for all it was worth.

During the latter part of the summer, there came one of those hot days that you sometimes read about.

The iceman hurried over his route so as not to lose all his stock before he could dispose of it.

When he arrived at Mr. Merry's house, Mort was on the piazza.

The boy mesmerist got an idea into his head just at that time.

He hurried out to the gate and made passes at the iceman and his helper.

"Bring us in a fine big piece," he said.

The two men picked out a regular old soaker of a block of ice.

It was the biggest in the cart, and as heavy as they could lift between them.

Both hitched on to it with their ice-tongs and started off with it.

"Put it on the front porch," said Mort.

"It will make the place cooler."

The men obeyed without a question.

That block of ice must have weighed two hundred pounds.

It was big enough to fill Mr. Merry's ice box right up to the muzzle.

The men deposited it on the front piazza and then went off.

When they reached the next house they simply remembered that they had left ice at Mr. Merry's—nothing more.

Well, the big block of ice stood on the piazza, gradually cooling the air and melting as well.

Now what under the skies did Mort want of that huge cake of ice?

Read the next chapter and find out.

PART XIII.

THAT Jumbo cake of ice did not stay on the piazza long without attracting some attention.

In fact, Mort set about letting some one know it was there in short order.

First he went into the sitting room.

Here he found most of the family assembled.

He caught their eyes in a second.

Then he threw sand into them, as it were.

"Hi-hi, everybody, don't you know that there is a fire out on the porch?"

Up jumped all hands.

"Don't you smell it? What's the matter with you anyhow?"

"Why, so I do!"

"Get out the hose, quick."

"Where is my canary bird?"

"Come get a move on you and put out that fire!"

Out rushed Mort's father and mother and sisters.

"Don't you see the fire?" asked Mort, pointing to the big block of ice. "Why don't you put it out?"

All hands ran for pails and buckets.

Cholley Smith was just coming to call, and Mort mesmerized him in a trice.

"Go get the garden hose, Cholley, and put out the fire."

Then Denny Murphy happened by, Mort merely snapped his fingers.

"Come in here, Denny Murphy, and help put out the fire."

Denny came in like a little lamb, He just couldn't help himself.

Then Rosie came up from the kitchen to see what all the excitement was about.

Mort got her hypnotized in a twinkling.

"Hi, hi, Rosie, get some water and put out the fire."

"A'right, Marse Mo'timah, I heah yo'."

In a jiffy there was a lot going on around that piazza.

Mr. Merry rang up the fire company on a telegraphic instrument in the sitting room.

Denny Murphy fastened on the hose and let the water go.

Cholley got a patent pump arrangement, a pail of water and a short hose.

Rosie ran for buckets and filled them at the well.

Then all hands went for that cake of ice. Mort just stood aside and looked on.

His father and mother had big buckets which Rosie had filled for them.

The girls had little ones which they filled for themselves.

They all dashed water over the cake of ice under the impression that the porch was on fire.

Cholley played his little hose and Denny Murphy worked the big one.

Rosie kept running to and from the well drawing water.

Ding-dong, dingalingding!

Along the street came the fire company hauling their engine.

Mort had not really intended to have the firemen turn out.

The old man had rung the alarm before he knew it.

However, this would only make more fun. Ding-dong, dingalingding!

Rattlety-rattlety-bang!

"Hi-hi, fellows, hurry up, Mr. Merry's house is on fire!"

The engine rattled, the men yelled, and people came running from all directions.

That gang on the piazza was doing its best to put that imaginary fire out.

Into the yard dashed the firemen. Plug Cutt was the foreman.

When he saw what Mr. Merry and the rest of them were doing he paused.

"Where's the fire, boss?"

"Why, here it is, of course."

"What! Do you call that a fire? Well, you must be off yer route, sure enough!"

Parson Wiggins, Judge Holdover, Deacon Shouter, Joe West, Jim Juggs, Phoebe Jane Snipe and several other prominent citizens had arrived.

"Why, Mr. Merry, how can you say there is a fire?" asked the parson.

"H'm, that's one of his son's practical jokes," sputtered Holdover.

"Wall, I wonder ef the taxpayers has got tu pay fur it?" growled Jim Juggs.

"Really, Mr. Merry," said Shouter, "I fail to see anything funny in your conduct."

"Tain't no fun for me to run half a mile, a hot day like this," panted Joe West.

"Some folks are really just too crazy to be let loose," snorted Phoebe Jane Snipe.

"Yes, you ought to know that, ma'm," chuckled Plug Cutt.

Meanwhile the Merrys and Denny Murphy and Cholly Smith and Rosie were doing their best to put out that supposed fire.

The piazza ran with water, and now and then Denny Murphy missed fire and turned his hose on one or another of the spectators.

Mr. Merry emptied a pail of water down Judge Holdover's back by mistake.

Cholly Smith knocked Plug Cutt's high hat off with a stream of water in the same manner.

Denny Murphy soaked the parson and he wasn't a Baptist either, and Mrs. Merry gave Snipe a regular drenching.

The spectators went away disgusted. The fire company withdrew and there was lots of grumbling.

Then Mort said:

"Hi-hi, all right, wake up, you're all right!"

After that he skipped out.

All hands suddenly found themselves doing the most absurd things and didn't know how to account for it.

"Why, Mr. Merry, what are you doing?"

"If it's a fair question, my dear, what are you doing?"

"Oh, glory, luck at the big cake of ice."

"Dere! I know dat ice man didn't come yet. Wha' fo' he wan' ter leave it yer, 'stead ob in de ice box?"

"Aw, how do, Miss Merry? Aoh, bai Jaove, me shoes are full of watah, don't you know, and the cwease is all out of me twousahs."

"Why, for goodness' sake, just look at the piazza. We can't dance on it to-night, it's so wet."

"H'm! it strikes me somebody's been making big fools of themselves."

Mort enjoyed all this at a distance, having skipped out.

Nobody knew just what had happened, but all hands knew that they did look ridiculous.

They all skipped out in a hurry, and things were as they were before the alarm.

The cake of ice was put in the refrigerator, the piazza was mopped up, and the family resumed its former occupations.

No one got onto Mort, and he chuckled over the little affair all by himself.

The folks in town had something to say about Mr. Merry's strange freak, of course.

However, as they had nearly all of them done just as ridiculous things themselves, they could not say much.

Mr. Merry did not deny that he had made a fool of himself.

He couldn't just remember about it, that was all.

When any one said anything about it, however, he would say:

"Oh, well, I had to be in the fashion, you know."

To Holdover, he said:

"Pretty nearly as bad as trying to catch fish in the road, isn't it?"

When the parson remonstrated with him, he retorted:

"Well, I don't go fishing on Sunday, anyhow."

Jim Juggs took him to task, and got for an answer:

"How about getting out your sleigh on a hot August day, James?"

When Sniffen spoke about the affair, he said:

"Caught any more burglars at noon, with that dark lantern of yours, Peleg?"

In fact, he had an answer for everybody. Consequently, people soon ceased to ask him questions.

Nearly every prominent man in town had been made a fool of that summer by the boy mesmerist.

Not one of them had got on to the reason of it, either.

Various explanations had been given, but none was correct.

Occasionally Mort had tried to mesmerize a tough subject and had failed.

You can't do it to everyone, you know. In such cases Mort had simply said nothing and had gone to sawing wood.

A few had asked him what he was doing, making such funny gestures, etcetera.

Mort had told them that he was simply trying light gymnastics to get up his muscle.

Because he had worked a snap on some body there was no reason why he should not do so again, however.

Some fellows were easier subjects than others, and so there was an excuse for them oftener.

Holdover was one of these and Mort enjoyed using him.

A few days after this latest incident, the boy mesmerist concluded to try his hand again at making fun for the crowd, and chose the judge as his victim.

He got hold of the judge before any one was around, of course.

It happened that he met his victim coming out of his house.

He knew which way he was headed as Holdover was due in court about that time.

There happened to be nobody near, but there were plenty down around the store which the judge would pass.

"Good-morning, Judge," said Mort, as the old fellow came out of the gate.

"Ah, good-morning, Morty," said the judge.

Now if there was anything that Mort hated it was to be called Morty.

It was a relic of his baby days before he had gone into breeches, and he wished to forget it.

His own people had called him Mort for a dozen years or more.

Only old fossils like the judge who took no note of the passing of time ever called him Morty.

Some people, however, will stick to those old silly names, and will call Mr. William Brown "Willie," even if he be a grandfather, because they used to do it.

Mort had not really intended to roast the judge that morning.

It simply happened that he was going past the house at the time and not looking for a victim.

The judge calling him Morty, however, settled the business.

Whisk!

Snap!

A couple of passes, a glance of the way, a wave and a snap and it was done.

The judge was tight in Mort's grip, and would stay there until the latter chose to let him out.

"I see you've got your hand organ with you, judge?"

"Oh, yes, I've got it."

"Give us a tune, judge."

The old duck bent over as if supporting a weight and made a grinding movement with his right hand.

It was exactly as if he were turning the crank of a hand organ.

"That's pretty good, but you don't turn even, judge. Make it more regular."

"Well, then, how is this?"

"Better."

The judge was now grinding away as regular as clockwork.

"That's first rate and that's a bully tune you're playing, too. Go down to the store and play it in front of the place."

"All right," and off started the judge.

"And be sure you hold your hat for pennies, judge."

"Why, certainly."

"And you're going to sing that tune, too, you know."

"All right."

"It's 'He Never Cares to Wander,' you know, don't you?"

"Why, yes, so it is."

"And you sing it like a bird."

"So I do."

"Don't forget now to play the organ and sing and hold your hat for pennies. Now you're off!"

Mort had kept alongside the judge till now.

Then he dropped behind and let the old fellow go on.

The judge was clean hoodooed, however, and was bound to do just as Mort had told him.

Mort followed, however, to see the fun.

Sitting on the steps leading to the store were Joe West, Plug Cutt and two coons.

Standing around were Peleg Sniffen, Deacon Shouter and several hayseeds.

In the door was the boss, and coming along the street were Mr. Wiggins, Miss Snipe and Mort's father.

Driving along the road was Jim Juggs, and there were others within a short distance.

When the judge got to the store he stopped. This happened to the edge of the curb and simply grind his imaginary organ.

Further he held out his hat and began to

It was

been

Ev

He had as much voice for singing as a bullfrog.

The tune he was supposed to play was known to him, but he didn't come within a mile of it.

He managed to get in a word now and then and the others he skipped.

He ground away for dear life and sang at the top of his voice.

Nothing like it had ever been heard.

All hands stared at the judge and wondered what had come over him.

"Well, I'll bet two to one his nibs has got a jag," said Plug.

The judge had just struck the chorus of his song.

"He never cares to wander from his own fire-side,

He never hum-mum hum-mum to roam,

With hum-hum upon his knee,

He's hum-hum, hum-hum can be,

For there's humpty-humpty hum, hum-tum!"

Then there was a howl.

"Encore!" shouted Plug.

"Well, gosh hang it, that's rich," guffawed Joe West.

They both chucked coppers into the judge's hat.

They weren't afraid of the old fossil and thought it was a good joke.

Jim Juggs reined in his old plug of a nag to see what was going on.

"Darned ef I'll give him a cent," he said, "cause he ain't got no license!"

"For pity's sake, is he doing that for charity or what?" snorted Miss Snipe.

Parson Wiggins didn't know whether to say anything or not.

"Chip in, fellows!" shouted the unregenerate Plug. "Don't be backward in coming forward!"

Then he threw in three or four more pennies.

The storekeeper added to the contribution, and the judge went on grinding.

He also went on singing.

This was the funniest part of the whole show.

The coons danced to it, but would lose a step every now and then.

Nearly everybody was laughing and thinking it good fun.

Sniffen was greatly puzzled to know what to do.

If it had been an ordinary organ grinder, that country cop would have ordered him to move on in a hurry.

Being Judge Holdover, however, it was a different thing.

The judge could fix it so that Peleg would stand no show for getting to be sheriff, if he ran for the office at the next election.

Consequently it behooved him to go slow.

This might be one of the judge's little jokes, and it wouldn't do to interrupt it.

Wiggins and Shouter were grieved; Plug Cutt and Joe West enjoyed it immensely; Miss Snipe was disgusted, and others were puzzled.

"Come on, boys!" laughed Plug. "You don't often get a chance like this. Chip in, everybody. The judge wants to buy a set of books so's he can study law. Come on now and give something toward a worthy object."

"He, he, that's good!" chuckled Bulger, the livery man, as he put in ten cents.

"He may really be doing this for charity," said Wiggins. "If so, we ought to encourage him."

Then Wiggins put in a nickel's worth of encouragement.

Shouter did the same, not to be behind in goodness.

The coons looked as if they thought they ought to have some of the money.

Meantime Holdover was singing the chorus again.

There was so much noise that you couldn't hear a word of it.

People were laughing, shouting and making no end of a racket.

Then up stepped Mort, quite unnoticed. "All right, judge," he said. "What's the matter with you? Behave yourself. All right!"

The judge came out of the trance or spell or influence, or whatever else you like to call it, as quickly as he had gone into it.

He suddenly found himself standing on the edge of the curb, facing a howling mob, his hat in his hand and a lot of pennies in his hat.

Of what had gone before he had not the slightest recollection.

The best authorities will tell you that when a hypnotized person comes back to his normal condition, he remembers nothing that occurred while he was under the hypnotic influence.

That is straight goods, and the judge proved the correctness of the theory.

He knew no more what had just happened than if he had been dead.

All he knew was that he was there, hat in hand, that the mob was guying him, and that there was money in the hat.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, in his sternest judicial manner.

"That's to pay for the fun we've had, judge," laughed Plug. "You hain't got much voice, but you'd be a dandy at turning an organ."

The judge emptied the contents of his hat in the street and put the hat on his head.

Then he summoned all his dignity to his aid, and stalked away with his nose high in the air, pouting like a spoiled child.

The coons made a dive for the money and got into a fight over its distribution.

Peleg went for them with his rattan and gathered up the spoils as part of his perquisites.

It wasn't long before the judge heard the story of his playing an imaginary hand organ and singing in front of the store.

He denied it of course, but there were too many witnesses against him to give him a good case.

He wouldn't even accept the thing as a good joke on him, but sulked and pouted and talked about liars and being insulted and all that till everybody was sick.

Not long after this Mort went away to college.

Soon after he was gone two or three copies of "Trilby" found their way into the village.

The book became the rage and everybody read it.

Then some one took a tumble and gave the snap away.

They declared that the queer things that had happened during the summer, had been the work of some clever mesmerist.

The explanation was reasonable enough. The matter was still involved in doubt, however.

Who the mesmerist could have been was an open question.

Mortimer Merry was not the only person who had left town just about that time.

There were others.

There had been several summer boarders, clever fellows, in town during the past ten or a dozen weeks.

It might be any one of them who had been doing the wholesale mesmerism that they all now believed in.

One and another fellow was believed to have been the malefactor, and several were openly accused.

Not a soul guessed Mort, however.

For some reason or another he was not suspected, and was at liberty to practice his tricks in new fields.

Some day we may tell of his further rackets in that line, but for the present we will say *au revoir* to our old friend, the BOY MESMERIST.

[THE END.]

No. 29. How to Become an Inventor.—Every boy should know how inventions originate. This book explains them all, giving examples in electricity, hydraulics, magnetism, optics, pneumatics, mechanics, etc., etc. The most instructive book published. Price 10 cents. Address Frank Tousey, publisher, 29 West 26th Street, New York.

No. 30. How to Cook.—One of the most instructive books on cooking ever published. It contains recipes for cooking meats, fish, game, and oysters; also pies, puddings, cakes and all kinds of pastry, and a grand collection of recipes by one of our most popular cooks. Only 10 cents per copy. Address Frank Tousey, publisher, 29 West 26th Street, New York.

No. 55. How to Collect Stamps and Coins.—Containing valuable information regarding the collecting and arranging of stamps and coins. Handsomely illustrated. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or sent to your address, post-paid, on receipt of price. Address Frank Tousey, publisher, 29 West 26th Street, New York.